

Ch 1-35 CN
Dragon Dragon

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Chapter 1: Newborn dragon girl

So dark.

Yi Longlong blinked her eyes. When she became aware that she could not see anything in this piece of darkness, her first thought was not “Did the skies darken”, but “Did I go blind”.

After all, to a sickly person who was bed-ridden all year long, having an additional ailment wasn’t something difficult to accept.

However, she soon felt something was wrong.

The place she was in right now was small, tight and sealed. Although the air had some kind of fresh faintly sweet taste, in this very small space, it was not very possible to be comfortable.

And so, Yi Longlong’s brain began to spin, trying to figure out the problem. Who was bored enough to place a nearly dead patient inside a box?

It wasn’t a few moments later when this thought flashed across, that Yi Longlong finally found out the changes within her.

Her body seemed to be not quite as huge, no, to be exact, it was hugely different.

Presently, her body seemed to be not quite human... there was no way to ascertain this in the darkness. The sealed, narrow space deepened her terror. Yi Longlong blanked out for a while, then began to diligently knock away at this thing encasing her.

No matter what, getting out was the first priority.

She lifted her “hand” and smacked this container imprisoning her, soft slender “hands” knocked on the smooth concave interior. This further showed that these “hands” were not like human hands. Yi Longlong strongly suppressed her uneasiness, *don’t think about the body’s changes, just keep focusing on how to escape from this place.*

Knocking with her “hands”, pressing with her body, and thumping with her

head, she did not know how much energy was wasted. Yi Longlong finally heard a chain of crisp cracking sounds, and following that, a slit of light shone through.

Suddenly coming into contact with brightness after being in the dark, Yi Longlong subconsciously shut her eyes, opening them only after her eyes have become accustomed to the light.

Suddenly, expressively rich and intense colours flooded into her field of vision. Contrasting the monotonous depression, the magnificence of colours were close to being eye-blinding, giving Yi Longlong the urge to close her eyes once again.

It's too dazzling. Having been in an all-white hospital ward for many years, it was mostly the white from the mattress and walls, and the black from the night. Being able to suddenly see this rich scenery gave Yi Longlong the misconception of being in a dream.

Cool and refreshing wind blew in the air, trees with jade-like leaves encircled a round lake. The wide and smooth mirror-like lake was comparable to a massive piece of azure gem. Under the beautiful sunlight, the gem's luster sparkled spectacularly.

The deep blue sky, refreshing green from the trees, and also the clear lake, was like a still picture; heart-moving and full of life.

A small distance from the edge of the lake and trees, the ground was piled with numerous white cobblestones of all shapes and sizes, just like the embellishments surrounding a decorative gem.

Such a scene reminded her of the coming of fairytale kingdoms from her dreams, but when Yi Longlong gazed down, she felt as if she was having a horrible nightmare.

Snow white, soft and small, it could not belong to the shape of a human. With the curiosity of a baby, it was presented to her eyes.

The cage that previously contained her, was half a snow white egg shell, with the rest of it splintered across the surroundings.

Just what in the world has she become?

Connecting her observations, her appearance was like some type of newborn

beast.

Strongly suppressing the impulse to hysterically scream, Yi Longlong excruciatingly climbed out of the egg shell. Using an unaccustomed body, she shakily walked towards the edge of the lake.

If she was going to die, then at least she will die knowing what caused her death. At the very least let her know, just what has become of her.

The body of a newborn was fragile and weak. It was fortunate that the lake was not too far away from the shell. Arduously moving her four small legs, and painstakingly arriving at the side of the lake, Yi Longlong laid onto the snow white, round-shaped rock that was warmly basking beneath the sunlight, then carefully peered into the lake.

When Yi Longlong was small, she had once seen a popular children's TV show called "Little Dragon People". The opening song had a lyric that went like this: "My head has a horn, there's a tail behind my back".

Right now her situation was quite befitting the description in the song. Upon her snow white head grew two very small horns, a snow white tail behind her, and besides all that, there was even a pair of newborn wings growing on her back!

This was an infantile, snow white, newborn ... Dragon.

Her appearance had several points of similarities with the dragons in Western fantasies from her memories. Only she was many times more harmless, and disregarding her small stature, she was completely white across the body. Ignoring the white body, her skin was very smooth. Putting that aside, nails that could not even amount to being sturdy grew on the infantile claws. The mouth didn't even have a single tooth.

The reflection in the lake, like a pure white treasure with a pair of clear blue eyes, other than being cute or not cute, it completely lacked the majesty of dragons from the legends.

No matter what, it can be ascertained that Earth definitely does not have this type of creature.

Turning into a ... dragon, isn't this too nonsensical?

Slowly recovering from her shock, Yi Longlong became vexed by complicated emotions. First, no matter the reason for becoming like this, she didn't know whether to be happy or sad about having this appearance. When she was still a person, due to her sickly body her life was spent mostly in a hospital. Every time she closed her eyes, she was mentally prepared for the day she would be unable to wake up from her slumber. Now that she is in possession of a new body, she has finally gotten rid of that fragile shell. She would have been extremely happy for this, but out of all things why wasn't this human?

The white oval stone beneath her body was perfectly warm. Yi Longlong laid on top of it, spacing out. A while afterwards, she finally begrudgingly stood up and gazed all around her, hoping to find something to eat.

She was hungry.

Even if she wasn't too happy with her current appearance, she could not just starve herself to death just because of that. While thinking this, her sensitive nose fuelled by her hunger smelled a sweet scent. This smell was similar to the smell from within the dragon egg. It seemed like something edible.

Following the smell, Yi Longlong found the source of it. It was actually the egg shell she came out from. White like a jade, the pieces of egg shell laid on the ground of white stones, giving off a glassy shine of brilliance and an appetizing smell. But looking at the egg shell, Yi Longlong could not help but question, is this thing edible? She hasn't yet grown any teeth, to add to that.

Trying out her little paws, she picked up a small piece and brought it to her mouth. Yi Longlong sucked on it. The hard egg shell dissolved like fruity hard candy, intense flavours flooded her mouth and flowed down her throat, becoming sustenance for the body.

All of a sudden, Yi Longlong reminisced about the words from a friend with whom she briefly shared the hospital wards. "Being able to eat is a type of happiness."

At the time, she was only eleven or twelve. Because she lived in the hospital for so long, resentment had begun growing in her heart. She resented being so unlucky as to live with such a body. How come other children could live freely without worries in their life, while she faced the endless medical treatments?

One afternoon, the big sister who was older than her by ten years was eating lunch while giggling. “Being able to eat is a type of happiness. With every mouthful I take, from the depths of my heart I thank the gods for letting me live another second.” Her face was completely blanched because of her illness, but her eyes still shone brilliantly and full of life.

That big sister only lived with her for around twenty days. She died when her illness acted up, however Yi Longlong had always remembered her words, even till today.

Does this count as being a new life?

Although this appearance did not appeal to her, this at least was another way to continue living her life.

To be able to have warmth, continue breathing and have a heartbeat. To be able to eat and think. This was already a type of happiness.

She sought contentment.

No matter where she was or what she had become, there were endless possibilities as long as she lived. Perhaps there is hope ahead.

Yi Longlong pondered while eating.

1. 雪白的, 柔软的, 娇小的, 不该也不可能属于人类的身躯, 以新生的姿态, 呈现在她眼中。...With the behaviour of a newborn, it was presented to her eyes.

Chapter 2: There will be bread

Newborn dragons didn't have a very good appetite. Having only eaten two pieces of egg shell, Yi Longlong already felt quite full. Collecting the rest of the shattered egg shell, she placed them into the egg shell half that was still standing on the ground.

Should she be unable to find other sustenance, this would be her rations for the time. It should not be wasted at a whim.

After pushing the rations with a struggle behind a rather big piece of cobblestone, Yi Longlong began to assess her surroundings. Although she already gained an understanding of the surroundings from her initial survey, she still needed to carefully examine the surrounding to be safe.

Right now, all she had was this dragon-like body, well for now let's call it a dragon. Things like transporting to another world or reincarnation, there's no need to care about those for now. The important thing to do right now is to continue moving forward.

Firstly, the problem of safety.

This was the wilderness, however for some unknown reason, the lake and surroundings were unnaturally clean, the lake crystal clear, while the stones surrounding the lake had nary a speck of dust. From the moment Yi Longlong woke up, all she saw was nature. There were no other animals appearing besides herself, fish did not swim in the lake, the surrounding forest was silent, with no sound of birds chirping nor insects creaking. The surroundings were silent, bordering on loneliness.

Fortunately, in her past life Yi Longlong had long been accustomed to being by herself inside her hospital ward. The peaceful silence around her had instead made it easy to acclimate to it like a fish in water, not to mention that with her current infantile state, the appearance of other animals could instead bring danger to her.

Lush greenery surrounded the lake. The plentiful leaves sparkled like gems, with each tree giving off its own abnormal splendor. Long slivers of grass with

light blue centers grew beneath the trees, giving off strips of silvery light.

Whether it was because of her small stature or the excessive vitality of the plants, just the silvery grass alone reached half her height. The huge leaves from the vines that dropped down from those trees were almost big enough to completely cover up her body.

Nothing much happened when she was still inside the egg next to the lakeside. This meant that the danger levels nearby were rather low. Then, it was best not to run amok for now, just in case of bumping into some scary creature.

While pondering, Yi Longlong all of a sudden felt as if something was wrong. The body seemed to lack something... clothes.

The small, white, delicate body that just climbed out from the egg shell would naturally not be wearing any clothes. Yi Longlong glanced down and found her body naked, and immediately felt her cheeks heating up. She didn't know whether dragons could blush, but if she didn't put anything on, it was something hard to get used to as a human soul.

Of the basic necessities, the first and foremost was clothing.

This problem wasn't too difficult to resolve. Yi Longlong's brain spun, her eyes narrowed on the jade-green vines wrapping the brown branches and scanned up then down along the trees, all the way to the tree roots.

Well, the distance, seems a bit far.

Looking at her own small body, then looking back at the long arduous route, Yi Longlong almost disheartened and wanted to immediately take a good nap on the warm cobblestone and figure out the rest of the problems afterwards.

However, she did not have the habit of napping. Struggling for a while, Yi Longlong gave a great huff then slowly headed towards the nearest tree.

Patter patter. In the midst of the slow journey, Yi Longlong tripped multiple times over the cobblestones before reaching the roots of the nearest tree. Although this body had a soft appearance, it was fortunate that it was perfectly resilient. It didn't hurt much when it bumped on the stones. After falling down, Yi Longlong would lie on the warm rocks and rest for a bit, then get up and continue on her journey.

Her “feet” climbed up the roots. Yi Longlong reached out two short, snow white claws, then tugged at the stalk of a broad leaf with all her might. It was impossible to tear it off. Yi Longlong finally resigned to using her nails to repeatedly file away at the stalk, chiseling the circumference before strongly tugging it again.

After filing some leaf stalks, Yi Longlong turned around to file away some newly grown vines. When she tore away a stalk, the thin vine she was grabbing onto with her claws snapped. Yi Longlong didn’t react in time, her body suddenly fell backwards, both dragon and leaves tumbled down, rolling all the way to the side of the lake and arrived perfectly at the side of her prepared rations.

Not caring about the dizziness, Yi Longlong gripped the side of a leaf and wrapped it once around her body. The leaf cylindrically wrapped around her torso, and then she wrapped thin vines around it twice to tie it together. It wasn’t tailored at all, but at least she reached the goal of covering her body.

She finally settled down after gaining clothes. She rested for a while and recovered some of her energy. Yi Longlong then once again headed towards the forest, this time the goal being the silvery-edged, light blue grass growing along the side. When she was procuring the clothes before, she found that those grasses were soft, with non-prickly fur along the edges. It even gave off a slight fragrance of jasmine. If she procured some of it, it could be made into a very comfortable bed.

The small baby dragon went to and fro along the lake and the woods. As time flowed by, her movements gradually became more and more agile, her limbs growing stronger. At the beginning, she fell over once every few steps, then later on she could dexterously hop from cobblestone to cobblestone. The sunlight gradually dimmed to the west. When the golden sunset was completely hidden by the woods, the rays of light were swallowed by the darkness of night. Yi Longlong also put a thick cover over her food rations.

The soft, silvery blue grass intertwined exuded a fragrance of jasmine. This fragrance weaved together with the sweet smell from the egg shells, forming a very pleasant aroma. While the silvery edges of the grass were not eye catching during the day, at night the grass radiated tiny specks of starry lights. Looking from afar, it was as if tiny stars had gathered together on their beds.

Although it wasn't much of a bed for now, it was very fun to sleep under the star-studded night sky.

Yi Longlong was open and optimistic.

The lake was like the serene eyes of the woods. The bright sea of stars was reflected from the depths of its pupil. Even though it was a dark night, it was not the least bit scary. Silvery lights floated from the silver-edged grass all around, as if the stars from the night sky had sunk down to the depths of the forest.

Yi Longlong sprung from her feet, her body falling into the soft straws of grass. The light jasmine fragrance wrapped all around her, and the soft grass soothed her tired body.

Although not many things were accomplished today, having only procured a set of clothing and laying out a place to sleep, when tomorrow comes she will continue working hard. She will find even more food, and an even safer and comfortable home.

It didn't matter whether it was human or dragon, both still needed to live and take care of themselves. Being able to continue living was already the biggest fortune. She needed to enjoy her human life to the fullest... Uh, her dragon life to the fullest.

There will be bread. There will also be Sanlu.

With a hint of a smile, Yi Longlong fell into a deep slumber.

A short while after falling asleep, the vines around her body untied, loosening the leaves wrapped around her. The vines pressed against her body. Yi Longlong couldn't sleep comfortably. Hazily rolling around a few times, the clothing made of leaves fell off, then with another flip of the body, the small figure sunk into the pile of grass.

Dawn light penetrated through the gaps of the trees, clearly illuminating the serene surface of the lake.

On the white cobblestones decorating the lake, spread a garish-looking pile of leaves.

Under the comfort of the broad leaves was a snow white dragon. Her body was

curled up, sweetly sleeping with two claws hugging a tail. Crystal dewdrops gathered on the tips of leaves, barely dripping.

Shhh...

Don't make a sound.

Don't wake up the slumbering... snow white dragon girl.

1. 面包, 会有的, 三鹿, 也会有的。According to Google, Sanlu seems to be a brand of milk powder. Maybe kids love to drink it in China? IDK.

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Chapter 3: Goal, no tooth decay

When the sun was all the way up, Yi Longlong finally woke up from her sweet dreams.

Opening her sleepy eyes, Yi Longlong was momentarily dazed by the size of the sun, which was double the one at Earth. She then realized her body was completely naked, so she resorted to wrapping the broad leaf around her again. After wrapping up her body, she proceeded to open a hole at the left and right side of her waist, then using a simple rope made of three long strands of silver-edged grass, she threaded from one hole to another, then pulled it towards the back.

She originally wanted to tie a knot behind her back, but sadly her claws were too short and couldn't reach all the way back, so she could only slowly tug the grass rope through the holes of the leaf, wrapping them around the body once, then tied it into a butterfly knot at the front.

The leaf was secured like so on her body.

During her stay at the hospital in her previous life, Yi Longlong often passed the time by making colorful crafts from plastic tubes. Her skill wasn't bad. Should her claws be a bit more agile, she could actually use the grass and weave out a garment. It was important to develop a pair of clever claws.

Done with the body, she took a break and stuffed two egg shell pieces into her mouth. When the sweet liquid once again dissolved in her mouth, Yi Longlong's face suddenly changed. She remembered something particularly important. She hurriedly leaned beside the lake with her mouth opened and head lowered. In the reflection of the lake was a rosy red mouth without a single tooth. Only then did she let go of her breath.

She had forgotten to brush her teeth last night. It was lucky... she had no teeth for now. From now on, she needed to take care of her hygiene. The goal is to have no tooth decay.

Although it is very delicious, this type of sweet thing is too dangerous for the teeth.

Resting for a moment, then drinking two mouthfuls of water from the lake, Yi Longlong's sight rested onto the grassy bed she laid out last night. This silvery-edged grass had characteristics of being soft and sturdy, both practical and aesthetically pleasing. Later on it would come in handy in other places.

Uprooting a few rather long pieces of grass, Yi Longlong's head bowed down as she began to weave. From today onwards, she will be exploring in the woods. The lake and surroundings had already been exhausted of interesting things. She wanted to gain some more information, which still required using her own eyes to search.

The reason for this decision came when Yi Longlong found her body's constitution not as weak as when she was a newborn. To compare with a human, if she initially had the strength of a three or four month old baby, then now, she had already reached the level of a six or seven year old child.

Although this constitution still wasn't enough for long adventures, it should already be enough to just search the edges of the woods. The initial objective was to walk a straight distance for five minutes, then after ensuring it was safe, decide where to expand her search based on the circumstances.

She then spent half a day using the silver-edged grass to weave a grassy hat that looked like a bird nest, and a net shaped like a satchel. Although subject to the constraints of materials, their usefulness was barely passable. The net was filled with tiny pieces of egg shell, hanging bulgingly from her neck. It was almost half her size. To prevent it from restricting her movements, Yi Longlong brought the net from the front to her flank, and then finally placed the grassy hat on her head.

The reason for bringing the egg shell with her was to prevent any accidents from happening to the food rations while she was away, whether it be rain or other people (beasts) or whatever. Conveniently it can also be used as a snack. As for the grassy hat, it was a disguise for camouflage and could help her hide better in the grass – it was always shown like that on TV.

Strongly grasping her small claws, Yi Longlong cheered for herself. *Let's see the new world!*

It hasn't even been a day yet, but Yi Longlong could clearly feel it. This childish

body was healthy and full of energy, completely different from the previous life where it felt like the reaper was always standing at the foot of the bed every day. This vitality was exuded from deep within the body.

The her from the previous life, had a smile that could never escape her bitterness. It wasn't easy passing each day at death's door, but now everything is different. She has a new life (although no longer on Earth), a new body (albeit not human), it doesn't matter how you say it, this meant that she could live a long and happy life, free from the worries of dying from sickness.

After the changes in her body, as time passed, Yi Longlong's inner self also gradually transformed, like a fresh green bud growing from a dead, withered tree. The ashen lethargy was swept away, the nature that was previously suppressed slowly awakened again.

Yi Longlong tied a knot on the silvery-edged grass by the outskirts of the woods, marking it as her starting point. Yi Longlong opened her mouth, and an unintelligible babyish voice sounded out from her throat.

“Let's go!”

Day by day, the time passed. Yi Longlong continuously went to and fro between the lake and the woods. Every time she came back, she would bring along some things, such as fresh berries, sweet juicy rhizomes, light-weight wood, sticky clay, beautiful ores... gradually enriching her private collection.

The area of this forest was surprisingly big, far surpassing her expectations. However, in contrast to the abundance of plants and minerals, Yi Longlong did not see many animals. There was one time where she headed straight in one direction for nearly twenty days, and only then did she finally spot a creature shaped like a fur ball. Yi Longlong simply called that type of creature a fur ball. The fur balls came in all shapes and sizes. The largest one was as big as her head, the smallest one she could grasp within a single paw. The fur on their body was soft and fluffy, and they came in almost every single color.

It was very funny the first time she came across the fur balls. At the time, Yi Longlong was carefully going through the woods and suddenly saw a clearing ahead. Within the grass were three to five fur balls of different colors huddled together. She didn't know that was a type of animal, and even thought it was

some new plant species, so she excitedly went up to pet it.

The moment her claws touched the fine fluffy fur, the fur ball immediately gave a shrill shriek. “Jii!”

Now when one fur ball is alarmed, it will kick off a domino effect. The fur balls surrounding it, and the fur balls surrounding the surrounding fur balls, will shriek with fluster. “Jii! Jii Jii!”

Yi Longlong was also stupefied. “Ah?” They can make sounds?

Next second, as if a drop of water had fallen into hot oil, tens of fur balls began to jump with frenzy. The way they jumped was exactly like a bouncing basketball, but their size was much smaller. The fur balls were terrified out of their wits, madly scrambling and escaping in the direction opposite to Yi Longlong.

Yi Longlong was scared silly. This was her first time seeing live animals in the forest. The opposing party had such a powerful reaction, that without thinking much and not managing to see how the fur balls reacted, she immediately turned around and escaped in the opposite direction.

Fur balls: “JII JII JII JII JII JII!”

Yi Longlong: “AAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!”

...

That was the furthest she had ever gone from the forest, but regardless of how far she travelled, she will always end up returning to that lake where she was birthed. She didn’t know why, she has an intriguing sense, as if it was an instinct flowing within her blood. That instinct told her, that the places nearby the lake were the safest for her.

The only animal around was herself. With the lake at the center, the massive woods surrounding was her territory.

In the end, she settled down by the lake, and also placed a small wooden plank by the side of the little house she made. It was used to calculate the dates in this world. Initially she used grass knots as records. When the claws become more strong and hard, she will use her nails and make a carving on the wood, recording the number of days since she has arrived in this world.

Ten days, twenty days, thirty days, a hundred days, two hundred days, three hundred days. Sixty-seven full tallies were clustered together on the wooden plank.

Facing each day full of joy and hopefulness, she did not feel this life was boring at all. Being able to jump and eat and sleep and laugh aloud, and not once falling sick or injured, with such a healthy body, Yi Longlong almost awoke from laughing in her dreams.

She was always leading a calm life, all the way till the three hundredth day when a person intruded Yi Longlong's territory. He broke the silence of the forest, and also interrupted her peace.

Chapter 4: The intruding brilliance

A year passed by – well let's count three hundred days as a year – disregarding the fact she wasn't a human, if there was something that Yi Longlong wasn't too happy about, then it would be her height.

Not long after her birth, she intentionally marked her height on a tree, going over there from time to time to make a comparison and check if she grew. Unfortunately, three hundred days have passed and Yi Longlong was barely a tenth taller than her initial height. This bit of growth can be negligible.

As for her strength, it had always been maintained at around the levels of a ten year old child. There were no obvious signs of growth like from the time when she was just born.

Despite this, Yi Longlong was quite satisfied. Just to note, in her previous life, when her illness was at its worst, she didn't even have the strength to get off the bed.

Walking to the side of the lake and taking off her clothing made of silver-edged grass, Yi Longlong regulated her breathing. Her snow white tail smacked once on the ground, and jumped into the lake with a typical splash.

She was not committing suicide, but was diving to the lake bed to retrieve some items.

It was around the sixtieth day she came to this world, when she first arrived at the lake bed. At the time, she didn't have any good cutting tools and was fighting the vines with her claws, when with unsteady footing, she fell on the ground and rolled down the slope into the lake.

Previously she didn't dare test out whether she could actually swim. Water was always collected at the edge of the lake. Sinking into the water, she found out she could actually breathe underwater and rejoiced, then took the opportunity to explore the place she had never set foot in.

Usually when Yi Longlong retrieved water, the water temperature was at a very normal temperature, but as the distance from the lake surface increased, she

could feel the temperature of the lake dramatically drop. Incidentally, this chilliness did not affect her at all. Although the surface of her body came into contact with the icy liquid, mysteriously she felt as if she was wrapped by warm waters. No matter what sort of troubles or sorrows, at this cool lake bed, it was all transformed into peace and warmth.

Putting aside her thoughts, Yi Longlong continued swimming down. As she got closer to the bed, the water quality became more thick, as if it had been greatly compressed. All sizes of water pieces surrounded her body.

Water piece was what Yi Longlong named it. She didn't know what the material was made of. It was a type of see through plastic that gave off a faint blue glow. It had a texture similar to the jellies and puddings from her previous life, but like plasticine, it could be pinched into all kinds of shapes.

It was as if a small accident happened during the solidification of water to ice, but it did not turn into ice, nor dissolve into the formless water. Instead it was in a form stuck between the two states.

However, this plasticine only appeared deep in the water. Once it was brought out and came into contact with the air, it would quickly harden in front of the naked eye and become a clear icy crystal.

Under normal temperatures, the water pieces could maintain the crystal form for around twenty or so days. Even if it had the appearance of ice, it did not disperse any chilliness. In her hands, it was only slightly cooler than the usual temperatures. As long as it was not warmed in the fire, it would not melt, but after twenty days, the icy crystal would transform into real ice, giving off a great chill, then finally melt into a puddle.

Making use of the water pieces' mysterious properties, Yi Longlong made many useful tools at the lake bed, such as knives, hammers and awls. When a batch of tools broke, she would dive down to the lake bed and create the next batch.

It was time for another batch to be made today. Yi Longlong behaved like usual, her body floating in the water, her claws kneading a ball of water pieces. While she was concentrating and manipulating it into the desired shape, she suddenly felt a dangerous omen.

There was something... intruding.

Although the distance was quite far, and Yi Longlong was still at the bottom of the lake, her senses were connected to the surroundings, from the lake side all the way to the forests. Her senses were especially stronger when she was at the lake bed.

She didn't know whether the thing was human or beast, but it certainly moved, and was even gradually approaching the lake where she was at.

The unexpected situation ruined her mood for kneading the water pieces. Picking up her newly made knife, she sped up to the lake surface, and returned to shore. She put down the already set water knife, shook water droplets off her head, and then hurriedly put on her leafy clothing.

After putting on her clothes, Yi Longlong looked left and right. She dived at her quickest speed into the grasses next to the trees. She carefully hunched her body, observing the situation outside through the gaps.

Closer. Getting even closer.

The intruder strolled directly towards here without any hesitation at all. When the intruder walked out of the woods, Yi Longlong could finally hear the footfalls belonging to a human.

Yi Longlong froze up.

When Yi Longlong was bored, she had wished to meet some people, but now that time has arrived, she was suddenly at a loss.

So what if she saw people? It still wasn't clear whether the opposite party was good or bad. If it was a bad person, she didn't feel she had the power to defend, as for a good person, how would she greet them? Would she go up and say, "Oh, hello, I may be a dragon now, but once upon a time I was also a human just like you."

No matter how open-minded she was, at that moment Yi Longlong still felt sorrow. When she was still human, she didn't realize how precious a human's identity was, but when she was no longer human, she strangely missed the things already lost and will never ever be returned.

Yi Longlong was deeply saddened. She thought to herself, *I'm no longer human... bah, why did it sound like I was reprimanding myself?*

Just when Yi Longlong was lost in her messy thoughts, the person finally walked out of the woods and came into her vision.

With a single glance, two words came into Yi Longlong's head: Let down.

From the danger she felt previously, she thought that the incoming person would at least look more powerful, but...

That was a male with a slender build. If comparing it with her current body, he would appear to be bigger and taller. He wore grey, worn-down clothing and from his waist hung a scabbard that had already produced cracks on the iron sword. The only thing worth praising, were the bangs that almost covered the face, and the long, messy blonde hair that reached down the back. The strands of hair were more dazzling than pure gold, flowing down and giving a beautiful brilliance, inconsistent with the plain clothing. It was as if shattered pieces from the sun had blended together.

That person walked out of the woods, directly to the lake shore. He looked down and scanned the surface of the lake, as if he was searching for something. Yi Longlong was praying in her head. "Quickly go away go away, if it's just passing by, then leave this place soon."

Clearly, no one heard her prayer. That person looked at the lake for a while, then turned around unerringly towards where Yi Longlong was hiding. He opened his mouth and spoke. "The little fella over there, why don't you come out, I'm not going to hurt you."

Chapter 5: Here lies Tahinia

Not going to hurt her?

Yi Longlong flicked her tongue. Who would fall for it? Bad guys would never expose themselves as the bad guys.

When that person turned around, Yi Longlong could see his appearance clearly. His face was half covered by bangs, but the chin and lips exposed were extremely exquisite. He would score a passing grade just by half the face alone.

After ascertaining the other person had already discovered her existence, and not just casually spooking the surroundings, Yi Longlong hesitated a bit then opened her mouth. “You...you...”

The language the man used did not belong to any languages she knew of, but the weird thing was, Yi Longlong could understand it, and her babyish voice also began to stutter out.

Seemed like this knowledge had already existed within her head, only that it was never unlocked all along without a suitable key. The presence of this man became that key.

Becoming encouraged after speaking a single word, Yi Longlong then gathered her strength as she continued with her request. A soft young voice carrying the sweet lilt of a child slowly emanated from the grass. “Let... me take a look... at your eyes.”

The eyes were the windows to the soul, or so Yi Longlong had always deeply believed. Although she had previously spent half her life in a hospital and didn’t interact much with others, there were many things she had witnessed in the hospital.

Young and old, sickness and death, this was the path that all people took. The presence of these four words accumulated everywhere in the hospital. She had seen pregnant women being transferred to the delivery wards, and old men quivering. She had witnessed the sick painfully groaning out on their sickbeds, and seen the people near her stop their breaths. From her sickness and pain, her

senses were instead more sensitive. It could very easily tell from people's eyes whether they harbored good will or ill intentions.

The blonde man's voice was very kind but she was still a bit scared, so she gave out this ridiculous sounding request.

The blonde man was slightly surprised, then began to smile. His smile was very laid back and casual, just like the rays naturally shining down from the sun. Following that, he lifted his messy hair and stroked it aside, revealing the two eyes covered beneath.

That was a pair of... very gentle eyes. The beautiful blue eyes were like a sky free of clouds, wide and almost endless. His pupils were welcoming and gentle, and like the sharpest weapon, immediately crumbled her defense.

The blonde man looked around twenty-seven or twenty-eight years old and had a handsome appearance. His messy hair that lacked grooming gave him an air of exhaustion. As for his eyes, it was as if it was always carrying a gentle smile.

However, what really made Yi Longlong feel at ease was not the blonde man's face, but his actions. He could have directly walked over and exposed her, but facing such an evidently weak voice, he instead chose to respect her wishes.

The blonde man waited again, and not seeing any movements within the grass, he patiently persuaded. "I have something really important I need to ask from you, please come out and meet me..."

His voice suddenly paused, because Yi Longlong came out.

Before meeting Yi Longlong, the blonde man thought that while there was a very weak and small creature prying in the grass, he never expected it to actually be a dragon, and even one dressed like this.

Yi Longlong wore clothes weaved from the silver edged grass, with lotus leaves for a collar. From within the short sleeves stretched out two snow white claws. The clothing was so long it almost dragged on the floor, and conveniently covered more than half the tail. As for the hems, silver and blue were stitched in delicate patterns, making the clothing made of plants even more fine and beautiful.

After a year, her handicraft became more refined. Trying out many materials,

she found out that the silver edged grass was the most useful. It was soft and sturdy, and could even maintain its freshness for a long period of time even after being plucked.

The blonde man felt that the scene in front of his eyes greatly departed from his common knowledge. He knew there was a creature in the grass, but never imagined a dragon would be hiding there. A dragon was a dragon, that he knew of. Usually, even if it was a newborn dragon, its size would at least be as big as an adult human, but the one in front of his eyes didn't even reach his knees. What really confounded him was that this dragon actually wore clothes.

Is this... really a dragon?

When the blonde man approached, Yi Longlong became depressed. There was originally still some hopefulness in her heart, wishing that the surrounding trees and grass were overly big and not because of her small stature, but now there was a reference for comparison. Her initial intuition was correct.

Looking at Yi Longlong, the blonde man looked as if he thought of something; a strange expression mixed with alarm appeared on his face. He slowly opened his mouth. "Little fella, were you born in this place?"

How did he know?

Yi Longlong warily stared at him, then slightly nodded her head.

The blonde man pondered, as if he was struggling to find the right words. After a while, he once again showed his smile. "First let me introduce myself. I'm Eric, a friend of your mother."

Next second, at her quickest speed Yi Longlong turned and hopped back into the grass. Her newly developed trust was broken down by a single sentence. In the books and TV shows from her previous life, those weird uncles would generally always speak like this to trick little kids. "I'm a good friend of your mother (father)."

Even if this guy was very handsome, it was still a handsome weird uncle.

Seeing the snow white baby dragon immediately hide away as if it received a shock from his words, Eric was dumbfounded. Did he really look that scary?

He knelt down, leveling his eyes with the eyes appearing from within the grass. “What are you scared of? I’m really not going to hurt you.”

Yi Longlong pursed her lips. “Liar.”

Eric startled. “Where am I lying to you?”

Yi Longlong gave a look of disdain. “I don’t know who my mother is at all? How would I know if you’re her friend? Even then, I’ve lived here since I was born and have never met you at all. How would you know who I’m the child of?”

She spoke clearly with reason and evidence, it just so happened with the voice of an abnormally childish voice, it gave the impression of a child posing as an adult.

Eric nodded with understanding. “So you didn’t know.”

He turned around and looked at the lake again, his eyes clouded with a little yearning. “Your mother’s name was Tahinia. In the language of dragons, Tahinia holds the meaning of eternal silver. Tahinia was a silver dragon. She was the perfect unity of elegance and power, the strongest among the dragons. When she lifted her head, the earth would tremble. When her wings opened, the silver brilliance would pierce the skies...”

Although this description sounded very strange, Eric’s gentle expression gave Yi Longlong a warm feeling. She did not interrupt, and continued to listen.

“Ten years ago, I was wandering the four corners of the world. I happened to meet Tahinia and became friends with her. There was a time where I lived with her for a whole year, so I’m very familiar with her air. And so when I got close by here, I felt an air and pressure belonging to her, and deduced your relation with her.”

His blue eyes dimmed. “This lake and the surrounding trees are too quite. There’s not even a single bird. That’s because there’s an extremely mighty pressure dispersing from the lake, letting other animals instinctively shy away. This level of pressure can only be the remnants of Tahinia after she had passed away.”

What he did not mention to Yi Longlong, was that the reason he separated from Tahinia that year was because they didn’t know who used some cruel

methods to heavily injure Tahinia. When that happened, he had watched the eternal silver body stained with blood fly with pain and sorrow across the sky. With such horrendous injuries it would have been difficult to survive it, even for a dragon.

Eric gently gazed at the baby dragon hidden in the grass. "Tahinia once told me that she laid an egg and was preparing to find a place to hatch. Although she has already passed away, she's fulfilled her words in the end."

He could almost imagine the situation at that time. Tahinia, heavily injured all over, in order to escape that terrifying enemy and to protect her child from harm, she flew all the way to this forest and when she arrived, she finally succumbed to exhaustion and fell into the lake. Even if her life had come to an end, she still tried her best to protect her own child.

The other animals in the forest did not dare approach because of the mighty pressure, and the icy air unique to silver dragons, with the lake as its center, created a suitable environment for a dragon egg to hatch.

The reason this place didn't have any disasters or scourges, and the place was a picturesque scenery with nice weather, was because a mother did not forget to protect her child, even after her death.

Eric pointed a finger at the lake, and said with a sorrowful expression, "Here lies Tahinia."

Silence perpetuated for some time. Yi Longlong once again opened her mouth. "So you're saying, my mother is actually at the bottom of the lake. She had already passed away?"

When she had dived into the lake, she always felt something familiar calling to her. Now she knew that it was probably the blood bonds between her mother and this body.

Every time she dived into the center of the lake, the water would thicken to a level where it was impossible to advance. She previously thought it was a unique trait of this lake, but now taking into account of what Eric said, it was probably because a mighty dragon rested at the center of the lake bed.

As for the changes in the water quality, it was probably something to do with

that dragon called Tahinia.

After feeling depressed for a while, Eric stretched out a hand to Yi Longlong, comforting her. “No need to be sad. Although your mother had passed away, I will look after you.”

Meeting Eric’s gentle blue eyes, she remembered that her own eyes were blue, then took Eric’s words into consideration. Yi Longlong then came up with a terrifying possibility. She sheepishly looked at Eric. “If it’s like that... does that mean you’re my father?”

1. 艾瑞克 – Ài ruì kè. Officially romanized as Eric.
2. 叔叔 – Shūshu. In Chinese culture, older men are referred by children as uncles. I guess it’s sort of like saying ojii-san in Japanese? If it’s a younger man, they’re usually called 哥哥 brother. Same goes for the opposite sex, with 阿姨 aunties and 姐姐 sisters.
3. 塔希妮雅 – Tǎ xī nī yǎ. I romanized it to Tahinia, with 希 interpreted as a ‘hi’, using Hillman 希尔曼 Xī ěr mǎn as precedent.

Chapter 6: A girlish dragon

Then according to Eric's descriptions, he had previously lived together inseparably with this body's mother for a year. With one person (male) and one dragon (female) getting along for a long period of time, perhaps some inter-species romance had developed one day, then finally with a rumble Tahinia had laid an egg, and then sorrowfully told the father she was off to incubate it...

Bestiality huh.

Yi Longlong scorned in her heart. *He didn't even spare a dragon.*

Eric's complexion blanched for a few seconds. When he completed digested the meaning hidden in the last sentence from Yi Longlong, his face immediately became distorted. Upon his relaxed smile floated an expression of someone barely restraining themselves from slaying a dragon.

This was but a young dragon, their understandings and views were different and not to mention she was still the child of Tahinia. If there were any faults, then as her mother's friend, he should tolerate it.

Eric tried his best to reassure himself, then after some time, he finally regained his composure and gasped out, "Little fella, your mother and I were just purely friends."

As a dragon, there was no doubt Tahinia was beautiful, but that was beauty to a dragon's standards. Even if he didn't have any relationships with the ladies, he would not change his measure of beauty from a human perspective to a dragon's.

Knowing that she had misunderstood, Yi Longlong became slightly embarrassed, and sincerely apologized. "I'm sorry, big uncle."

Just as the words left her, an expression of really wanting to slay a dragon once again appeared on Eric's face. He took a deep breath, then tried to show a gentle look as he spoke to Yi Longlong in a very depressed tone. "I'm still very young, I still haven't reached the age of being called a big uncle. You can directly call me by my name."

Eric had never been suspicious of why Yi Longlong, who had never met any outsiders before, had such clear cognitive abilities. Everyone knew that the dragon race gained wisdom quicker than the humans, and through his interactions with Tahinia, he even knew the dragons had a secret. The children could partially inherit their parent's intelligence, and so not only did he not suspect that the soul residing in this young dragon was not the original product, he was also quite overjoyed. Although the child of Tahinia did not grow and develop too well, her intelligence was not too lacking. It was a blessing amidst misfortune. Although this cleverness made him want to slay a dragon, it didn't stop him from feeling gratified.

Thinking back to his old friend, Eric was refilled with warmth. As for the things that Yi Longlong had babbled about, he no longer took to heart. He gently looked at the clear blue eyes appearing in the grass, and as he looked, this little fella gradually gave him the impression of something weaker and smaller. Tahinia was the mightiest of dragons; she would have probably never thought that her own child would be this weak and small, right?

Having exchanged stares for a while, Yi Longlong could feel his kindness. Only then did she lower her guard, and once again slowly walked out from the grass. Even though she did not have any evidence to judge whether everything he said was true, the other party did not have any need to spread lies to her. If Eric wanted to harm a weak and petite thing like her, then he would only need to use physical violence to achieve it.

Although Eric did not show his strength, Yi Longlong could feel it. He was very, very powerful. From the moment he got here, she already had that feeling.

She still wanted to know more about her situation, and hear everything Eric had to say about all things related to that, such as dragons per say.

“That...” Yi Longlong nervously waved her snow white claws. “You don't have any urgent matters, right? If it's convenient, how about living here for a few days, okay?”

Eric had originally planned to persuade Yi Longlong to leave with him, but after hearing her words, he suddenly changed his mind. *This child is probably not willing to leave this place, right? That's fine as well, then I'll temporarily*

accompany and spend some more time with her.

He beamed and stretched out a finger, lightly touching her claws. "Alright then, little fella."

When Yi Longlong said she was bringing him over to her house, in Eric's general understanding, it would be the limit of a dragon if she managed to find a tree hollow to nest in, or modified the tree hollow in any way. Something like a dragon constructing a magnificent palace wasn't unheard of, but a young dragon would be incapable of doing so. And so, when man and dragon arrived at the wooden house constructed in the middle of the forest, Eric was once again amazed by Yi Longlong.

This was a perfectly clean wooden cabin, constructed in the middle of a rather big clearing. There were some furnishings at the front and back of the cabin that confounded him, for example the wooden plank carved with strange symbols next to the house. The wooden cabin was about as tall as his shoulders. It had smoothly polished white colored wooden materials as walls, and brown tanned tree barks were neatly placed on the inclining rooftop. The surfaces of the tree barks and wooden materials were coated with a layer of tree resin, presumably to water-proof it and prevent moisture from seeping in.

Emerald green vines were planted at one corner, meandering and climbing along the stakes all the way to the roof, decorating the wooden cabin with viridian patterns. From the eaves hung an ornament composed of nuts and wooden pieces cut into various shapes. The ornament lightly swayed with the wind, producing a pleasant resonance.

Detailed engravings were carved onto the square window frames, and even the smallest corners were polished smoothly, without a single stubble.

At the entrance of the cabin hung a curtain weaved from silvery blue grass. Blue and silver gently crisscrossed, creating a peculiar pattern.

If it was placed within a bustling city, this wooden cabin would not be worth mentioning at all, but in a forest lacking the tools and materials required, this could definitely be called an exceptional existence.

Shocked, Eric turned around and assessed Yi Longlong. “Did you make all of this?”

He could feel that there were no other signs of beasts besides Yi Longlong and Tahinia. He was already quite surprised when he saw Yi Longlong wearing clothes. Now having seen this house, it had really subverted his knowledge.

First let's not talk about why this little dragon favored the lifestyle of a human, just how did she construct such a house? Did she just rely on those two little non-lethal claws?

As he listened to Yi Longlong's simple explanation of how she had discovered and used the tools, how she picked the materials, and how she took some time out of every day to decorate her house bit by bit, Eric suddenly felt that the little snow white dragon by his side was not actually a dragon, but a careful and meticulous young girl. In this isolated place, she had leisurely and unhurriedly tended to her little wonderland.

Yi Longlong was feeling slightly regretful. Back then when she was building this cabin, she had hoped she would grow a little bigger so she tried to make the cabin taller. This way when she grew, she would still be able to use it. Sadly, she had misjudged the speed of her development. This cabin was far too big for her and in Eric's opinion, slightly small.

As the host of this place, Yi Longlong would naturally look after her guest. She nodded towards Eric. “You probably haven't eaten yet, how about having lunch at my place?”

Judging by the sun, it was nearly noon.

Chapter 7: Even tractors have dignity

:June: [TL Note: Changed Tahinir to Tahinia, and character thoughts will no longer be italicized to keep true to Chinese raws. If something's in present tense it's most likely a thought.]

When he heard that Yi Longlong was going to treat him to lunch, Eric immediately felt a sense of *déjà vu*.

It was ten years ago when he had just gotten to know Tahinia and she had treated him to lunch. That had come to be an unforgettable experience in his life. At the time, the graceful Tahinia had stretched out her massive body, then gracefully sliced off a huge chunk of raw meat and placed it gracefully in front of him, gracefully inviting him to dine together.

Eric shuddered and then scrambled to deter Yi Longlong who was entering her house. "There's no need, I've brought my own rations."

He patted the pouch hanging at his hips. Inside the pouch was a piece of dried jerky. Although it wasn't anything exquisite, it was already pretty good to have such food in the middle of a journey.

When he retrieved his jerky, a wooden bowl swimmingly floated out from within the cabin. Eric was taken aback, and then looking closer he found that it was actually Yi Longlong carrying a wooden bowl on her head, her two small white paws clasping on the edges steadyng it. It had almost completely covered her whole body as it was far too big for her petite stature, at first glance giving people the misconception of a bowl moving by itself.

Eric was planning to decline, but after seeing the contents of the bowl, he was dazed once again.

That was an extremely finely made engraved wooden bowl. Fresh lettuce leaves were piled at the bottom of the bowl, and placed on top of the leaves were small round bread rolls that were slightly bigger than Yi Longlong's paws. Their golden yellow skin amidst the leafy greens made the rolls look even more crispy and cute.

After putting down the bowl, Yi Longlong seemed to remember something and then turned and rushed back into the cabin. When she came out again, each of her paws were holding a jar. She placed the clay jars onto the ground and peeled off the leaves sealing the opening. A gush of sweet aroma belonging to fruit jams drifted out, and as for the other jar it was filled with slightly greenish water.

“This is the bread I baked this morning; it’s been left for a morning, it might not be as delicious as when it was freshly baked, though if you’re hungry, then go fill your stomach up. Inside the jar to the left is jam for spreading on the bread, the right holds the sap from a specific type of tree branch. It’s very sweet and refreshing; nothing’s more suitable than that to go with the meal.”

Eric awkwardly put away his crude-looking jerky. He squatted and picked up a small round roll, lightly dipped it in the jam and brought it to his mouth. The fresh bread was soft and delectable, and the jam made from wild berries was slightly tangy in its sweetness, carrying a peculiar taste of the wilderness. After finishing a roll, he lifted the jar holding the tree sap that Yi Longlong offered and drank it all in a gulp. The light refreshing sweetness immediately coursed down his throat, greatly stimulating his appetite.

When he initially saw the strangely shaped stones and clay pottery placed at one side of the house, Eric had not understood their applications. Now he realized that they were various kitchen appliances Yi Longlong used in her cooking. For some of the items, even a human like Eric couldn’t place a name on them.

This was an ingenious mind, being able to make this upper standard of food in such primitive conditions. Eric began to feel he was falling behind the times. Since when did the dragons’ skill in cooking develop to this level of finesse? Just by judging the food they had prepared, he already could not discern who the actual human was.

Yi Longlong was still feeling some regret. “A pity there’s no animals nearby, otherwise I could’ve even whipped up some meat dishes.”

When she was exploring the forest, she found wheat actually growing in it by coincidence, then carefully transplanted them to a more open and sunny place. It didn’t require much of her care, and the wheat robustly grew. Its growth cycle

was only twenty days. In the absence of diseases and disasters, the granules of wheat grew bountifully. Ever since she had found the wheat, Yi Longlong had a steady source of staple food and no longer needed to work hard every day scavenging for food to satiate her hunger. She had originally thought that the wheat from this other world was especially tough, however now looking back, it seemed it was not because the wheat was of good quality, but of the circumstances of the environment.

This was the influence of Tahinia.

The other vegetables transplanted here were also flourishing the same way.

She was able to eat free from worries, all by the grace of that silver dragon.

Yi Longlong felt slightly guilty. If she had known that the daughter she had desperately used her life to protect did not survive, and the one that continued living in this world was a spirit from another world, would she be extremely saddened?

Perhaps she will never be able to find the answer to this.

The difference in sizes of the two bodies was too big. Yi Longlong could get eighty per cent full from eating a single bread roll, while Eric had to eat a few just to whet his appetite. By the time he was full, he had already eaten what would have been a few days' worth of food for Yi Longlong.

It had been a long time since Eric had eaten a normal meal like this. Ever since he entered this damnable forest a year ago, he could only rely on the crude jerky he made to put his hunger at bay. Being able to eat this type of food in the forest, he even felt it was more delicious than the food from royal banquets. After eating his fill, Eric saw the containers around him and received a shock. Around him were ten or so empty jars, four wooden boxes that were opened and already emptied of food, two bowls, and other bits and pieces of leafy wrappings. Other than the bowls, everything else were pocket-sized.

Even if Eric had been more thick-headed, he did finally feel some embarrassment. "Uh. I ate so much of your food, I really do sincerely apologize."

Yi Longlong waved her snow white tail as she gave a cheery smile, her claws slightly trembling. "You're the guest, there's no need to worry over this type of

trifling matter. Can you tell me some stories about dragons?"

She borrowed an opportunity to figure out the outside world.

Naturally, for this type of minor request, Eric readily accepted. Through his words, Yi Longlong understood a little more about this world. There were no divergences from her speculations. This was a world of fantasy, with swords, magic, dragons and elves.

The calendar system here was quite similar to Earth's. Twelve months in a year, thirty days in a month, at the start of the year there were six extra days that became an annual holiday. Having lived within the territory influenced by Tahinia, she did not feel the climate change, however outside the boundary there was spring, summer, autumn and winter.

The number of dragons in this world was extremely few. Ten years ago when Eric had met Tahinia, there were a total of sixty-three members in the whole dragon race. In comparison with other races, it was a pitifully small number, but this race wielded an almighty power and no one could contest that.

The dragon race had very long lives. When he had met Yi Longlong's mother Tahinia, she was around a thousand years old, however within the dragon race, she was but a young dragon that had just moved on from her childhood. Of course, the power of this young dragon was the strongest in the dragon race.

"What special characteristics do dragons have... other than their long lives..." Eric painstakingly recollected, "They roughly have massive bodies, tough skins..."

He nervously glanced at the petite Yi Longlong. He was gradually lacking confidence in his knowledge.

"There are huge wings on their backs, soaring in the skies..." His line of sight fell onto Yi Longlong's back. There were two holes opened up at the back of her leafy clothes just right, revealing the two white, pocket-sized wings. But can those wings really fly?

All he knew was a single dragon, Tahinia. As for the other dragons, his understanding was just lacking. He was not in the position to say exactly what type of creature a dragon is. Even then, dragons were not as common as lettuces on the street. Although he had seen dragons other than Tahinia before, he had

only watched their shadows from afar.

While brushing his messy nest of golden hair with distress, Eric heaved a sigh. “How about this. I’ll bring you to your race, they can probably advise you on how to grow. I’ve heard Tahinia mention the dragon race’s gathering place. Hopefully they haven’t changed places within these past ten years.”

“Advise me on how to grow?” Yi Longlong thought it was a bit strange. “I have been growing...”

Although the speed was a bit slow.

Eric stretched out a hand and stroked her smooth head. This time his expression carried a hint of false hope. “As a dragon, your growth is such a big failure. Your mother Tahinia was around fifty, sixty meters long, possessed the sharpest claws and the power to make a mountain shake. But you, although you’re only a year old, the rate you’re growing at is just too slow!”

As she listened, Yi Longlong’s face darkened.

Comparing her with Tahinia was like comparing an aircraft carrier to a tractor. Not only was she out of the league in terms of size, even the quality was terribly poor.

Yi Longlong could not resist swiping a paw at him: Even tractors have dignity!

1. 恨铁不成钢

Direct from : wish iron could turn into steel at once , <set a high demand on somebody in the hope that he will improve>

This idiom originates from the Chinese classic 《红楼梦》Dream of the Red Chamber, which is considered as one of the in China (the other three being Water Margin, Romance of the Three Kingdoms and Journey to the West).

Chapter 8: Toothpick, sea of trees, people

They had knife shaved noodles for dinner. A slab of dough was taken out and placed at the edge of the pan, then using a knife, noodle slices were shaved from the bottom straight into the boiling water below. When Yi Longlong had done this in the past, her small size required her to stand on a stepladder to do this type of task. Additionally her skill with the knife was poor, always shaving a thin slice and then a thick slice, but now with Eric here, all the difficulties no longer posed a problem. The moment Yi Longlong finished saying she needed to slice, Eric promptly drew out the sword by his waist. Slices of noodles with consistent thickness flutteringly flew like the willow leaves, arcing through the air leaf by leaf and dropping into the water.

At first, Yi Longlong was only feeling impressed by Eric's performance, but gradually she noticed that the orbit of the falling noodles was too precise. Every slice of noodle flew at the exact same angle and fell into the pot at the exact same place. It was hard to believe that this was his first time chopping noodles.

As for Eric, he was currently in a very relaxed posture. He practically didn't even look at the noodles and readily sliced down precisely without error.

Yi Longlong leaned over one of his shoulders. Raising a paw, she poked at the mini paw print that was already imprinted on his handsome face. "Your handiwork's not bad, if you ever lose your job, I advise you to become a chef."

When they chatted in the afternoon, she found out that Eric was a wandering swordsman. According to his words, his level of skill is very average outside, but if this standard is considered normal, then just what will formidable people outside be like?

Eric nodded with agreement. "I'll think about it."

After finishing dinner, Yi Longlong produced a wooden cup. One paw held a cup, while another paw held a wooden stick with fine bristles. In the midst of Eric's look of surprise, she scooped out a cup of water. The wooden stick with bristles was dabbed with a little bit of salt from the salt jar, then delivered into her mouth.

Eric could not help but ask, “What are you doing?”

Picking her teeth after dinner? What a giant toothpick.

Yi Longlong gargled and spat the salt water onto the ground, replying, “Brushing my teeth.”

In this year alone, her teeth had already begun to protrude. It was small and pointy, though not considered sharp, but thank goodness there was no tooth decay.

Eric became slightly absentminded. Since when did dragons learn to brush their teeth as well?

When night fell, Yi Longlong once again made preparations for the food for tomorrow. With Eric helping out with the heavy duties, her work load lightened quite a bit. Yi Longlong went back to her house and slept early. Because the house had size limitations, Eric could only resign to sleeping outside.

Eric squatted next to the wooden cabin and lightly tapped her outstretched paw. “Good night, little fella.”

He watched Yi Longlong open the silver blue grassy door drape and recede into the cabin. He heard her tiny footfalls, and then waited until the breathing inside the house had settled. Only then did Eric leave the wooden cabin. He slowly walked to the side of the lake and gazed down at the vast starry night sky reflected on the surface.

“Tahinia.” He murmured softly, “My utmost, sincerest apologies. Nine years ago, I could not save you. In the past few years I’ve been continually evading, but I would have never thought I will meet you again in this way... From this day onwards I will do my best in looking after your child, please rest assured.”

A wide and gentle wave oscillated from the heart of the lake, as if a sleeping silver dragon was smiling at him.

Yi Longlong and Eric lived by the lake for a total of ten days, all till Yi Longlong’s birthday came by. It had been exactly a year since she had hatched from the shell, and on that day a man and a dragon finally left this piece of lake.

For a place where she had dwelled for a year, Yi Longlong was very reluctant to leave. She hated the fact she could not pack away the whole wooden cabin and all the other items, but she knew that there was no way to bring so many things along on the journey, so she tentatively packed her toiletries, a few changes of grassy clothes, the seasonings she had carefully collected, the baked cookies used as snacks, the flint for starting a fire, drinking water, and the wind chime that hung on the eaves.

No matter how much more reluctant she was, Yi Longlong still decided to follow Eric into the outside world. Although she had already lived a year as a dragon, she had never once forgotten she was originally a human herself. Even if she had come to a different world, she still wanted to see the people here with her own eyes and listen to them talk.

Besides that, there was still one more reason.

The parents from her previous life died very early on, and because she was severely ill, as her guardian her aunt didn't really treat her harshly, but in reality it couldn't be considered as familial warmth. Every time she saw other harmonious families, she would feel envy and jealousy. As for now, she had snatched the body of Tahinia's child and even enjoyed her care. This made Yi Longlong feel completely unsettled. Her leaving here, was not completely without the intention of running away.

Everything to be brought along was packed inside a wooden box, with Eric carrying it as a coolie. All Yi Longlong had to do was safely sit on top of the wooden box, bobbing along to the gait and occasionally looking around at the scenery.

Eric walked very steadily and also moved very fast. His shadow shuttled through the forest. It took only half a day's work to surpass the distance that had taken Yi Longlong twenty days to reach, and see those furballs that had once frightened both Yi Longlong and themselves.

Through Eric's explanations, Yi Longlong learned that those types of furballs were called yeks. They were an extremely cowardly species, but because their level of intelligence was very low, they were instead not very sensitive towards Tahinia's pressure and could get even closer to the lake than other creatures –

though only a little bit closer.

Seeing the yeks and then walking some more, it was then that they had completely walked out of the boundaries of Tahinia's pressure. Yi Longlong gradually broadened her horizons as she came across even more animals. Some of them were similar to Earth's, and some of them she had never seen before. When she was learning about the animals, she simultaneously discovered one thing, and that thing was, Eric was a total utter directionally challenged idiot.

The reason he could directly find the lake was due to entering the influence of Tahinia's pressure. With the center of the lake acting as the source of the pressure, it was like a beacon that guided him so he didn't lose his way. It was the same with leaving the lake, but after exiting the boundary of the pressure that was used to tell apart the directions, Eric's sense of direction immediately fell into disarray.

It was only then that Yi Longlong knew, before he had met her, Eric had already been lost in another part of this vast forest for nearly a year-But if he hadn't lost his way, then he would have never blindly stumbled into Yi Longlong.

Left with no other choice, Yi Longlong took charge of directions. Although she had never been so far apart from the lake, at least her keen and accurate senses kept them from heading north, east, south and west and return to the starting point.

Yi Longlong only realized just how immense this forest was when she had finally exited it. She and Eric had walked for ten straight days, and along the journey they had passed by mountains, rivers and lakes, but they never did manage to see the edges of the forest. The sea of green seemed to endlessly spill out, as if there was no way to reach the end.

Yi Longlong sat on top of the box. Whenever she felt tired, she would lean on Eric's shoulder. The blond man's body was just as warm as his hair, like gathered pieces of brilliance from the sun.

On the twelfth day of the journey, Yi Longlong and Eric still did not get out of the forest, but they saw other people.

1. 刀削面 dao xiao miàn-Relatively short flat noodle peeled by knife from a firm slab of

dough.

2. 苦力 kǔlì -Coolie, literally translated as “bitter labor”, term for local unskilled laborer.

edit: 耶克 Yé kè – Yek, The official name for furballs

Chapter 9: Palette squad

They walked until dusk came, then just like usual they stopped to rest in a rather open clearing. Eric drew out his sword and chopped the long grass growing on the ground. After clearing it up, just when he was about to set down the box from his back, his movements suddenly paused for a moment.

Yi Longlong felt his shift in demeanor, her head popped out from within the leafy clothing that covered her body. She asked with confusion, “What’s wrong?”

Eric had a moment of silence, as if he was confirming something. After some time, a smile appeared. “Someone’s heading in this direction right now.” He added on, “Around ten people... no, eleven. One of the people have very light footsteps.”

As light as a cat walking on a cushion.

Yi Longlong also became silent for a moment. “Hey, Eric, should we go hide ourselves?”

Although she really wanted to see other living people, there were so many coming all at once. She was still a bit instinctively timid. Should the opposing party harbor ill intentions, they would definitely be the ones suffering if a conflict arose.

Eric warmly laughed, then touched her head with a fingertip. “No need to be afraid, humans aren’t that bad, you should interact with them more.”

When the two were conversing, the other party was already closing in. The first one to emerge from the forest was a purple haired youth wearing light leather armor. Yi Longlong quickly shrank back into the leaf, her eyes assessing the incoming people through a gap.

That youth looked around the same age as Eric. A dagger hung by his waist, a crossbow and backpack on his back. His was thin but not frail, his movements extremely alert. He had dark purple short hair. Beneath his long narrow eyes was a vertical scar. At first glance it seemed like a long trail of tears, but his sharp

eagle-like expression made him not look like the type of person to cry.

When he stepped out from the forest, his footsteps produced no noise at all, well at least Yi Longlong couldn't hear it. Seems like this is the person with very light footsteps that Eric had mentioned before.

Seeing Eric, the purple haired youth was taken aback, as if he had never expected to see another person in this type of place, but he reacted quickly, his sharp expression was instantly swept away and replaced by a courteous look of goodwill. The change was so quick it nearly made Yi Longlong think that everything she had seen just then was all an illusion.

The purple haired youth lifted a hand, placed it on the other side of the shoulder and saluted with a nod towards Eric. "Please forgive my rash intrusion; we are travelers passing by this place. May I ask if you are in the company of others?"

Eric smiled and replied in the same manner. "No, there's only myself, and also the little fella on my back."

The purple haired youth also felt there was something hidden in the box of leaves on Eric's back, but he thought it was just an animal and didn't place too much importance on it. Hearing that Eric was by himself, his movements slightly relaxed and said, "I still have companions at the back. Would you mind letting us rest in this place?"

They had walked all this way and only seen this place with a wide patch of clearing. If they were to keep moving forward, the dark night will greatly inconvenience them.

Naturally Eric smiled and said he didn't mind.

Receiving his approval, the purple haired youth speedily returned to the forest, and then a while after that, he once again came back leading a group of people.

When she saw this group of people, Yi Longlong came up with a thought: Ah! A palette.

There were a total of eleven people in the line, five standing in front and six at the back. The six people at the back all had the same outfit and carried heavy items on their backs. Judging by their humble expressions, they were most likely

followers or servants. As for the five standing at front, each person had a different hair and eye color. Other than the purple haired youth Yi Longlong had seen at first, the rest of the four were distinguished as: blond hair blue eyes, red hair fiery eyes, grey colored hair and eyes, black hair green eyes.

Each person's colors were different, colorfully standing together simply just like an art palette.

When these people stood together, Yi Longlong could tell with a glance that among them, the blond blue eyed youth was the leader of this squad. It wasn't because he was the handsomest of them all, and not because he wore the most extravagant and finest clothing on his body, and especially not because the sabre by his waist was fully inlaid with bright sparkling jewels, and absolutely definitely not because he had the same colored hair and pupils as Eric.

-It was because of his slightly arrogant elegance coming from his body, a concealed dignity.

A moment later, that youth signaled to the purple haired youth with a nod of his head. The purple haired youth immediately obeyed and came to converse with Eric, firstly expressing his gratitude for willingly sharing this clearing with them, followed by the exchange of names and identities of both parties.

The purple haired youth called himself Roland and was a rogue, employed by that blond youth named Easley Heine. Of the remaining three people, the redhead youth was Easley's friend, the grey haired lad in his early twenties was a priest invited by them, and the black haired youth was Easley's follower.

The six servants were all attendants from Easley's household, accompanying him everywhere on his travels.

Roland particularly highlighted, Easley was a nobleman.

In comparison to the endless introduction from Roland's side, Eric simply stated his name. "Alvin."

Yi Longlong gave him a strange look. Wasn't his name Eric?

To sum it up, this was an adventure squad formed by the children of nobles. Because there were just too many people, Yi Longlong couldn't momentarily remember them all, and so simply referred to them as the palette squad.

Once the palette squad arrived, those six servants accompanying them promptly began to make their moves. They retrieved foldable tents and various equipment from the massive luggage on their backs and began to busy themselves at the center of the clearing. The person putting up the tent poles put up the tent poles, the person setting the chairs set the chairs, the person refilling the water refilled the water. Although it was busy, it did not appear to be disorderly.

Yi Longlong bit back her tongue: Did these guys come out to have an adventure or have an outing ah.

Not daring to speak in front of other people, Yi Longlong reached out a paw and pulled on Eric's blond hair. The latter person immediately understood and said to Roland, "I need to go gather some firewood, I'll be temporarily gone for a while."

Before Roland could even nod his head, the first to speak up was the young noble Easley at the back. "Can I trouble you, good sir, to help us gather some along the way as well?"

His clear voice, although modest in tone, didn't seem too humble at all, like an upperclassman being lenient on a lowerclassman, giving people the feeling that helping him out was a type of honor and not something exhausting at all.

At this time Eric had let his hair down again, blotting out his eyes and half of his face. Other than his head of blond hair being overly beautiful, Eric looked just like a dejected wandering swordsman.

Eric laughed and agreed to it. He carried on his back the wooden box and the Yi Longlong on top of the box and walked into the woods.

He casually chose a tree with a thickness that a person could fully embrace. Eric pulled out the long sword by his waist and was about to cut down at the branch sticking out from the lower part of the tree, when suddenly his blade stopped just an inch off from the tree. He raised his head and looked to the top.

Following his gaze, Yi Longlong could see a tiny tree hollow just above the branch. A brown furry head poked out from within the tree hollow, watery black eyes looking at Eric with timid curiosity. Eric placed his sword down with a smile and waved his hand at the head. "Sorry about that, I won't disturb your home,

I'll change trees."

Finishing his words, he walked a bit further, chose a tree without a tree hollow, and with a light swing of his sword the blade sliced through the thigh-thick branch as if it was tofu. Not even a bit of sound was made. With a twist of his wrist, the green leaves fluttered down en masse and the branches were separated into strips of equal thickness.

Yi Longlong wasn't interested in watching him log trees. She shifted her body up onto his shoulders, her paws poking at Eric. "Hey, do you owe lots of money outside? Or done a lot of bad things? Or cheated on a relationship?"

Eric didn't have any reasons to provide a false name to a baby dragon. Then clearly, him using the name of Alvin was because he didn't want to tell his real name to the palette squad.

1. 罗兰Luólán – Roland
2. 伊斯利•海因涅Yī sī lì•hǎi yīn niè-Easley Heine
3. 艾文Ài wén – Alvin

Chapter 10: [redacted]

Chapter title placed at end

Sure enough, after hearing Yi Longlong's questioning, Eric gave a bitter smile. His wood logging motions did not stop. "The family of Easley Heine, is a family with the largest power and position in the empire, however in this family, there's this one such requirement for the children inside, and that is when they reach sixteen, seventeen years old, they have to go out on an adventure and travel for three years. Refusal of the expedition, or should the expedition be unsuccessful, they will be removed from the family. They return after three years, only then do they go through the rite of passage and become a real family member."

Yi Longlong's eyes widened: It's this abnormal?

Eric continued, "Now this Easley Heine, if I didn't guess wrong, he's probably undertaking the test right now. There'll be people secretly observing him and carrying out an evaluation along his adventure. I'm also probably qualified as a person who can give an evaluation... Uh, although I've shirked my duties a bit, since we bumped into each other, I'm planning to use this opportunity to observe him for a while. If he knew that an adjudicator was watching him, perhaps he won't act like the usual... En, although he doesn't recognize me, he should be able to recognize my name, because I am..."

He didn't finish his words, because at this time Roland had walked over here. He probably couldn't wait to come. Looking at the cleanly cut firewood already piled on the ground, a sliver of doubt flashed across his eyes, but he didn't say anything much and only gave his thanks to Eric and said Easley invited him over to have dinner with them. Only then did he leave while carrying the pile of firewood.

Eric heaved a sigh and sheathed his long sword back into the scabbard. He did not continue his previous topic, instead following Roland back to that clearing.

Through the preparations of the palette squad led by the young noble, when Eric came back, this clearing had already become something entirely different. The weeds and rocks on the ground were all swept away, and standing neatly

were three tents shaped like a house. In front of the tents, the young blond nobleman and his three other palette companions sat around a square table. Each of them was tidying up their somewhat non-messy appearance with graceful movements, as if they were preparing to have a big feast.

Of the six attendants, some of them were retrieving cutlery from the luggage, some of them took out a simple stove and placed it on the floor, and there was also one who produced a bottle of red wine and four glasses, came to the sides of the four palette squad members sitting at the table, uncorked the bottle and poured it for them to taste.

Although those six attendants held the position of servants, their figures and appearances were also top notch, with handsome faces and well-proportioned bodies. However, in contrast to the palette squad, they paled in comparison, especially in front of the blond youth's beautiful face.

Yi Longlong stared slack jawed. She watched this group of people instantly set up a comfortable dining atmosphere. Three youths and a young priest were enjoying grape wine, and on the other side the attendants were beginning to cook with carefulness. Someone was making cheese soup, someone used a flat pan to sizzle steaks, someone started to smoke meat on a fire, and someone began to toss the salad...

Yi Longlong leaned on Eric's back. As she watched those people retrieve one item after another from their backpacks just like the robot cat Doraemon, her eyes opened wider and wider: she needs to take back her recent comments, this group of people are not here on an outing, they're bringing a portable kitchen and restaurant everywhere to show off.

Eric found a space in the corner, placed down the box and sat down. He retrieved a water bladder from the box, then casually plucked a leaf and curled it into a very small cup, poured a little water into the leafy cup and delivered it to the side of Yi Longlong's mouth.

Yi Longlong still didn't dare to reveal herself. She hid under the leaves, sticking out her tongue to lick the clear water in the leafy cup while secretly observing with her eyes the palette on the other side.

The blond youth Easley gracefully sipped a mouthful of red wine, then took a

napkin and dabbed his lips. Every movement of his exuded an air of rich sophistication; his manners were impeccable. Having only meaningfully taken a sip, Easley then placed down his wine cup, faced the attendant next to him and said, “Mind chilling it for me?”

The attendant gave a reply then turned around and informed another person. Yi Longlong watched on with curiosity, only to see that person procure a bowl, their lips slightly moving as if it was reciting something, then soon after, a few fist sized ice blocks appeared out of thin air and fell right into the bowl, dispersing a white colored chill.

The bowl was passed around straightaway, the ice stirred to pieces, and the bottle of wine placed inside the pieces of ice to chill.

“To actually have a mage as an attendant, what a luxurious lineup.” Eric muttered.

Mages in this world were not something uncommon, but also not so as to be seen everywhere. There was a person who took the effort to calculate, that on average within about ten thousand people, there will be one mage. Usually the mages will serve an aristocrat or even in national services, but Easley actually had one as a servant.

If this was earth from Yi Longlong’s previous life, it was like letting a doctoral candidate go to a restaurant to be a waiter. Not only was it extremely wasteful, it was also thoughtlessly lavish.

Eric didn’t really try to lower his volume. When Yi Longlong heard this, it had also spread to all the ears of the palette squad. The opposite party didn’t have much of a reaction, obviously already used to these words of amazement. Only the blond youth Easley politely nodded with a smile towards Eric, then modestly retracted his sight.

Of the five people in the palette squad, only Roland didn’t sit with them, firstly because there were only four sides on a table, and secondly Roland was an employed person; his identity was not quite the same as the other four. He checked on the surroundings, then after making sure there was no danger, he walked towards Eric and also casually found a spot nearby to sit down. He had his head bowed, the purple colored fringe covering both his eyes. He took out a

silk cloth and carefully wiped his dagger, as well as examined the spring mechanism on his crossbow.

When she listened to Eric giving an introduction a few days ago, she already knew that the rogues from this world were not referring to the wallet stealing thieves back on earth. This was a type of special profession. During the wars they can act as assassins or spies, during periods of peace they also act as spies and collect intelligence, or are employed by an employer to do some grey things. These people were masters of machinery and various types of practical skills. The rogues who spend long times adventuring out in the wild have the ability to cautiously avoid many natural disasters. It is a form of blessing for everyone in the same line of job to bring along a hardened rogue.

Although she already knew that the rogues here were proper professions, and she knew she shouldn't engage in job discrimination, Yi Longlong still couldn't psychologically get around it. Seeing Roland makes her feel a bit odd.

Yi Longlong took a glance at Roland, who was not even three or four meters away from Eric, then quickly retracted her sight. At this time, the four men palette squad's chatter had attracted her attention again.

“Easley, you left your family to explore, has it already been a year now?” That redhead youth drank a mouthful of chilled red wine, thought of something and brought up the young nobleman’s family test.

This redhead youth was called Dixon. Similar to Easley, he also had a sword on his body and was also around the age of eighteen years old. His expression was hearty and bright; his attitude towards Easley was also the most affectionate and close out of everyone.

Easley lightly nodded, and smilingly said, “Yes, although the road has been extremely difficult, I can feel I’ve gained a lot. The journey this year has let me mature quite a bit.”

Yi Longlong secretly slandered inside: You call this journey difficult, then what do you call the time where Eric got lost for a year and could only shabbily gnaw on dry jerkies? Doing flips in hell?

Naturally, it was impossible for Dixon and Easley to hear Yi Longlong’s words inside. They continued their peaceful conversation; the one speaking was still the

redhead Dixon. “I say, Easley, I’ve heard that along your adventure, there’ll be people secretly observing and giving marks, it’s very strict, and also it’s unknown what standards they use. I’ve heard, however, that a few years back, it seems like there was someone from the Heine family who scored full marks, and also had a great reputation...”

“Eric Heine.” Easley clipped in just right to finish off the sentence, his tone carrying a hint of respect, “My uncle.”

Yi Longlong subconsciously took a glance at Eric, who was currently concentrating on feeding her water from a leafy cup.

Chapter 10: My uncle

1. 机器猫小叮当 – Robot cat Xiǎo dīngdāng. Doraemon is affectionately called Xiǎo dīngdāng in Chinese localizations of the popular children’s manga, due to the bell on his collar. The official name in Chinese is 哆啦A夢 Duō la A mèng. Doraemon is known for having a magical pouch that acts like a bottomless bag and contains countess magical items that solves a particular problem. Each chapter is episodic in nature and revolves around the new magic tool of the day. I wish I had a robot cat like doraemon, though mostly for the magic food blanket that magics all the food you want.

2. 狄修安 Dí xiū ān-Dixon (I’m taking a leap here but can’t think of anything better)

Chapter 11: Far to the horizon, close by your eyes

Eric Heine.

Yi Longlong looked at this Eric who was right in front of her eyes with suspicion. The latter didn't react, as if he completely had not heard that blond youth's words at all. His wrist showed not a single tremble, continuing to feed her water.

This guy in front of me, just doesn't seem like a guy who could get full marks ah.

Is this the real deal or just the same name by coincidence?

After the blond youth reported his uncle's name in full, he then continued, "Dixon, about my family test, you do not need to worry for me. I have already previously inquired the family elders about it. On this journey, as long as I do not do anything that damages the Heine family reputation, do not yield when facing stronger opponents, do not bully the weak, do not succumb to temptations, do not get tricked by falsities, as well as maintain diligent practice of the sword, after three years, no matter what there is no way I will not pass. Ten is the full score, of which six points come from basic assessments."

He paused, then gracefully lifted his wine cup. A thin line of a smile appeared on his face, momentarily accentuating his beautiful appearance. "However, what I desire, is an even higher evaluation."

Dixon pondered for a moment and proposed a recommendation. "Do you know how your uncle, I'm talking about Lord Eric, how he received such high evaluations back then? Perhaps you can follow his example."

Easily helplessly shook his head. "Uncle Eric's feats are impossible to repeat. I've asked my father about this before. According to him, back then, Uncle Eric only had average marks in other areas of grading, however in the final year of his adventure, he encountered the ruler of the dragon race, Her Highness Eternal Silver. He earned recognition from the ruler of the dragon race with his exceptionally powerful strength. This recognition awarded him additional points."

Eternal Silver? How come this name sounds so familiar?

Yi Longlong tried hard to recall it. When she took a glimpse at the silent Eric, it suddenly dawned on her: Eternal Silver, isn't that the name of this body's mother, Tahinia?

Connecting together the friendship between Eric and Tahinia, Yi Longlong was only then completely certain, that this blond youth who looked like a dejected swordsman, actually once had such a glorious past.

Easley spoke with pity. "Although I am confident in my swordsmanship... the problem lies with the dragon."

Yi Longlong listened, silently befuddled: What's the problem with dragons? Even if Tahinia died, there's still other dragons, unless it has to be Tahinia and no other? Is her dragon mother from this life really that great?

The two youths did not completely notice Yi Longlong eavesdropping, only discussing with seriousness. At this time, their dinners were already done. Each person took their servings. Easley deftly manipulated the dinner knife, sliced off a piece of tender steak, then delivered it into his mouth with a fork. Slender white fingers pressed on the silverware; each and every contour of his knuckles was extremely beautiful.

The redhead youth didn't dine in a hurry. Yearning and longing appeared on his face. "I really wish to once again witness Lord Eric's valor..." "

Yi Longlong glanced at Eric: Valor? Where?

The words over on that side still haven't finished. "Nine years ago, I was on the streets of the Royal City, and saw a glimpse of him from far far away. At the time he was riding a tall and mighty steed, and wore a white robe with golden embroidery on his body..."

-Yi Longlong's gaze wandered down, trying to find hints of golden lines from Eric's greyed worn out clothes.

"...bore the famed sword Poem of Cerulean, that is a treasured sword with a hilt entirely carved out from sapphires..."

-Yi Longlong's gaze once again wandered to the crude iron sword by Eric's

waist.

“Long, golden hair smooth and neat like satin...”

-Gaze wandered up to the nest of blond hair.

“Well-cultured, with a graceful manner and an elegant bearing, worthy of being an example of a noble.”

-Where was the elegance when this guy, on the first day they met, completely devoured her few days' worth of food?

After Dixon finished spouting a whole chain of praises, Yi Longlong finally could not help but think that it's possible that the silver mother dragon had met two Erics. The one that the palette squad is currently talking about is actually another guy called Eric in this world.

Following Dixon's words, Easley also delved back into his past memories. He spoke with earnestness, “Uncle Eric is my idol. His strength and temperaments are what I'm striving towards as a goal. Looking back, I haven't seen Uncle Eric for seven or eight years already. After completing his rite of passage, he left with his follower and ever since then had never returned, only to hear elsewhere from time from time about his heroic exploits.”

-He's right in front of you; you even ordered him to chop wood just then.

Yi Longlong sympathetically looked at the beautiful and delicate blond youth. Pitiful child, if you were to see the current him, your image of your idol will definitely be shattered.

Right when she was absorbed in listening to the conversation, Roland walked towards them with a large plate held in his hands and arrived in front of Eric. “Sir, if you don't mind, please have this food.”

On the plate was a bowl of pottage, two pieces of toasted bread and a steak. To them, this was already a luxurious dinner.

Eric gave a simple word of thanks and received the plate, but Roland did not leave. His gaze inadvertently swept over the leaves on Yi Longlong's body. “May I enquire what food this one needs? Our reserves are quite abundant.”

Yi Longlong shrank into the leaves, avoiding his line of sight.

Without batting an eyelid, Eric shifted his body and shielded between Roland and Yi Longlong. “Thank you for your generosity, but this little fella is very shy of strangers. Things like food are not of importance.”

Roland was met with polite refusal. He did not get angry and only smiled a bit, then turned around and left.

Yi Longlong waited until Roland had walked far away, then let go of her breath. Although she already told herself to not discriminate against professions, every time Roland’s gaze swept over her, she still felt uneasy all over and only wanted to hide away.

Using the small knife he always carried on him, Eric sliced off a small piece of juicy steak, held it on his fingertips and fed it to Yi Longlong. The eyes hidden beneath the hair carried a hint of doubt: How long are you going to stay hidden? I’m still planning on being with them for a few days, you can’t always stay hiding under the leaves right?

Yi Longlong chewed the steak, and returned a look after swallowing it down: Then what score are you planning on giving your nephew? You do know that the other person extremely admires you.

Without saying anything, Eric made an ‘eight’ figure with his hands: eight points.

Yi Longlong was surprised: That high?

Eric smiled with some helplessness and nostalgia. His lips wordlessly opened and closed: Once upon a time, I also enjoyed putting on airs like him. Seeing him is like seeing my past self. As long as he doesn’t make any mistakes on his journey, I’ll be a bit more lenient.

Astonished, Yi Longlong looked over to Easley on the other side and was somewhat unsure: You once also brought that many people to swagger about on an outing?

Eric’s face reddened, and continued mouthing: Back then I thought this was more respectable.

Yi Longlong showed disdain in her eyes: So you were once that stupid and wild.

Eric used his eyes to slay a dragon: Can't the young be wild?

Finishing up dinner, Eric went up to Easley and gave thanks, at the same time revealing the behavior of a weak person seeking protection. He proclaimed he was lost in the forest (though this was true), and wished to accompany them in order to avoid harm from vicious wild beasts on the journey.

Within a few words, Eric found out the palette squad's real objective in coming to forest.

1. 艾瑞克大人Ài ruì kè dàrén-Lord Eric. 大人dàrén is used as an honorific to show their reverence. Eric does not actually hold the title of a Lord (or at least not revealed to be one in the story so far).

Chapter 12: Concentration is quintessence

The palette squad, or also at the same time the luxury adventure squad led by Eric's nephew, was deep within the vast forest because they accepted a bordering town's mission. The mission required them to investigate within the forest, a tower that could possibly be hiding an evil magician.

This all began around two years ago. A famous rogue was passing through the woods and happened to see a tower deep in the forest. He approached with curiosity to investigate, but was instead met with merciless magical attacks from the tower. Heavily injured, the rogue barely escaped from the forest, and in a small town nearby, right before he died, he spoke about the dreadful magician within the woods.

This stretch of woods was technically the border of two countries. As precautionary measures, the border garrison officers asked strong adventurers to investigate the situation inside the forest.

The forest was vast, with vicious beasts appearing everywhere, and in addition to the density of trees acting as barriers, it was not suitable for brigades to march through. The borders also didn't have any extra soldiers to waste for things like this, and so the most economically viable option was to employ adventurers.

However, since two years ago, the adventurers had come group after group, but not one of them have ever returned. This had instead attracted further attention from the garrison officers, and the palette squad today was already the tenth group to come forward. Should the palette squad also fail, the garrison officers will then turn towards the Royal City and request a large troop to force through the forest.

All in all, in the name of justice, the palette squad was on a crusade against the evil magician.

In order to dismantle the traps and locks that may possibly exist inside the tower, Easley employed the rogue Roland. To prevent the other side from using cursed magic, he even invited a priest, and there was also a mage within the

attendants. The three youths were excellent swordsmen. No matter what situation will arise, this line up will most definitely be able to deal with it.

After he finished talking about the purpose of this journey, Easley then smilingly asked Eric, "May I ask, good sir, just exactly what animal are you carrying on your back? It's not as if I want to pry into other people's affairs, but there is a very high probability that we will be facing a powerful and evil magician. Every single detail must be taken care of, and I wish for nothing to be left out."

Eric spoke light-heartedly, "This is a little fella I'm taking care of, but she's rather timid and doesn't really dare to meet new people. I'll go ask if she's willing to meet you all."

After having said that, he walked back to the side of the box, kneeled till he was eye to eye with Yi Longlong, then lightly lift up his messy hair, his pair of gentle, wide blue eyes meeting hers just right. "You'll eventually have to interact with other people besides me, right? Why don't you take the first step now?"

He gently encouraged.

The need to be brave, to let go of worries, to try, to interact.

If she was to spend her whole life withdrawn inside her shell, then she will never be able to see the magnificent sights outside.

Yi Longlong gazed at Eric's eyes. It was different from Easley's conceited arrogance. This was a pair of beautiful clear blue irises, as clear as a bright sky free of clouds, high and vast, so warm, without a hint of shadow.

He gently encouraged, and even so, he will definitely protect her.

In that moment there was a strong feeling of trustworthiness.

Yi Longlong lifted her paws, plucked off the leaves covering her head, revealing a snow white head. She slowly stood straight up with her two feet, with two white paws placed in front of the hems of the leafy clothes. She turned towards the palette squad, and with some anxiety and apprehension gave a small bow. A small young voice spoke. "I am Alvin's companion, pleased to meet you."

Of course, she didn't forget Eric's fake name.

The moment Yi Longlong revealed herself, when the palette squad saw her, it immediately fell into dead silence. The only sounds made were the winds at night lightly blowing across the leaves.

Hearing this silence, Yi Longlong became more and more uneasy, not knowing what she did wrong.

After for who knows how long, an attendant finally couldn't restrain themselves from screaming out. "Oh my god! It's a dragon!"

Although Easley and company woke up from their astonishment much earlier than the servant, out of various reasons they all didn't say anything, all until someone broke the silence. It was Dixon who was the first to express his amazement. "It's real, a dragon. We didn't see wrong did we?"

Easley elegantly gave a light sigh. "I have never imagined that I will have the opportunity to see a dragon in my life."

Dixon nodded his head in agreement. "We are just too fortunate... but... why is it this small?"

Yi Longlong's eyes glared over there: So what if it's small? Is being small not allowed? Concentration is quintessence!

This time, Eric became the one to be confused. Sensing the palette squad's expressions becoming weird, he could not resist blocking in front of Yi Longlong. "Everyone, this is only a baby dragon, there's nothing to be amazed at, right?"

Just then, Easley's behavior slipped too many notches. Although dragons were not a common sight in this world, with his family's influence and his position within the family, if he wanted to see dragons, it would not be something particularly difficult to do. Why did they show this level of excitement?

Easley heaved a long sigh then gave a bewildered look at Eric. "Don't you know about it, good sir? In the last six months, recent rumors about this huge incident have been circulating across the lands."

Eric cautiously asked, "What incident?"

He was lost in the forest for a year, it was a given that he could not be well informed and grasp the things happening outside.

Repressing his urge to go around Eric to look at Yi Longlong again, Easley spoke a truth that shocked both man and dragon. “Actually from a decade ago, the dragons in this world have been continuously killed off in secret. It was only because humans and dragons very rarely interact with each other, and in addition to those in the upper echelons of the empire who knew about it but kept it a secret, it resulted in people failing to notice it. In the recent six months however, a small number of dragons who were rather close with humans were also killed off one by one, and just not long ago, within the span of one night, all the creatures across the lands that branched off from the dragon race – not the conventional dragons, but because of the similarities in appearances and being crowned as a dragon, the wyverns and land dragons also lost their lives in the same inexplicable way. Right now, there are no longer any creatures existing on the lands that can be called a dragon, other than the one by your side.”

Although that white dragon had an excessively tiny body, perhaps it could be the reason why she had escaped this attack.

Yi Longlong listened in terror. In other words, she was the last giant panda in this world, the functionally extinct baiji, the critically endangered South China tiger.

Eric gasped.

He had never expected the truth of the incident to be like this. So back then, Tahinia’s death was not an accident, but the catalyst of the dragon massacre?

After killing Tahinia, that mysterious black shadow then continued to kill other dragons?

In these recent years, due to things that have happened in the past, he practically ignored information about the dragon race on purpose. In addition to that he had left the family, so there was no way for him to know about the internal matters. It was actually today after so many years, that he was aware of such grave news.

Eric was almost convinced by his intuition, that the dragon massacring bastard was the same person as the one who murdered Tahinia. Besides that person, no one else had this kind of terrible strength, and no one else was that ruthless and cruel.

Easley and company did not think Eric's reaction as strange, and only thought he was shocked speechless. Given it was such a shocking incident, it was already an extremely brave act for a weak wandering swordsman to not cry out in fear after hearing it.

Seeing Eric look as if he was planning to stay in a daze, Easley finally could not resist opening his mouth and disturb him. "Greatest apologies, good sir, I have a rather difficult request, and I hope you can agree to it..."

He glanced behind Eric's back. In the end he could not control the small desire within his heart. With grave formalities, he requested in earnest, "Please sell me the dragon behind you. I am willing to pay, no matter the cost. Currently, she is the only, single dragon in the world; there will definitely be many calculative people who will desire to possess her. No offense, but with your strength, it is probably not enough to protect her. Although my own strength is rather weak, the Heine family I belong to will at least have some measures..."

Nobles didn't have to follow formalities when facing commoners, but in order to express his sincerity, the rich gentleman of noble birth still slightly stooped down for a while. He first put forward the temptation of gold, then highlighted that with a dragon, Eric will be attracting unscrupulous people, followed by tactfully letting Eric know in an objective manner, that his strength was too trashy and could not protect a dragon this precious, and possibly have it snatched away. At the last moment, he flashed his family name to show that he, instead, is the person with the strength to protect a small dragon.

Should Eric really only turn out to be an insignificant wandering swordsman, then through the twists and turns of his pressuring and persuasion, it was possible he would weakly yield and hand over the dragon's custody.

But Eric wasn't.

Hearing these words from Easley, all he did was merely turn around, stretch out his arms and tenderly embrace Yi Longlong into his bosom. "Sorry, I cannot honor my promise."

He was apologizing to Yi Longlong.

He said he was going to bring Yi Longlong and find her race, but in the end he couldn't keep his words. In fact, from today onwards it will never be honored.

He was extremely conflicted. He had just brought Yi Longlong away from the lake, and now let her receive the news of her whole race being decimated.

Carefully holding Yi Longlong, Eric then turned around again and shook his head, turning down Easley's request. "Much apologies, this dragon is extremely important to me, I will not turn her over to anyone."

Since he now knew the dragon's situation, he will go to greater lengths to protect Yi Longlong, stopping other malicious people from taking her away, as well as prevent the mysterious person who has been massacring the dragon race within these years from finding her.

He never expected to be actually met with refusal. A dumbfounded expression appeared on Easley's handsome face. "Why don't you reconsider for a moment? Being overly stubborn will bring you and this dragon misfortune."

Eric's tone persisted in its obstinacy. "There is nothing to reconsider about this matter."

1. 白暨豚Bái jì tún – Baiji, a functionally extinct species of freshwater dolphin, AKA Chinese river dolphin, whitefin dolphin, Yangtze dolphin.

Chapter 13: Follower

Easley had taken Eric as a lucky wandering swordsman, who happened to pick up a recently born baby dragon and have it by his side, and even had the bad taste to have her wear the leafy clothing. It was perfectly reasonable for him to assume that Yi Longlong was Eric's pet.

This, is the world's last dragon.

Easley's thoughts were aroused with interest. Although this dragon is very small, if he can bring the last dragon back home, then his test will definitely gain not a small amount of points.

As for Yi Longlong, from what he can tell, the Heine family can provide the best foods for Yi Longlong and protect her safety. This was already sufficient.

Yi Longlong was too weak and small.

The weak do not have the right to voice their opinions-this was the world's law and also the unspoken core tenet passed down the Heine family.

Although the Heine family has always been known for being courteous, amiable and humble, and both nobles and commoners speak very highly of them, the true nature of their so-called proclamation "Do not bully the weak", places themselves first in the position of absolute power over someone's fate. It was a form of charity and not out of respect for the weak.

Beneath the veil of warmth and beauty was this callousness.

Eric himself was also a person of the Heine family. He knew what sort of education the children within the family received, and so he perfectly understood Easley's current thoughts and behaviors.

However, understanding does not represent agreement. Yi Longlong was the child of an important friend. Even if there was only one dragon in the world, or even tens of millions of dragons, there was only one Tahinia, and also only one of Tahinia's child.

This was a matter that did not require any thinking from the start.

Eric didn't plan to explain the relationship between himself and Yi Longlong to Easley, firstly as it will be quite bothersome to explain, and with Easley's current mentality and knowledge of the world, there was no way for him to understand, and secondly he still didn't want to expose his own identity and say out his relationship with Tahinia.

One explanation will lead to even more explanations; he might as well say nothing at all.

Easley's smile froze for a moment. In the past when he proclaimed he was from the Heine family, he would always receive quite a lot of abnormal attention, or else amazement or respect, but never was there anyone who was as unperturbed as the wandering swordsman in front of his eyes.

Ever since Easley left his family and roamed around outside, all he ever received were flowers and praises on his journey. He had never received such a blunt refusal. Seeing the little white dragon being cherished inside Eric's embrace, he could not restrain himself from asking, "Sir, can't you reconsider? I can give you a very huge sum of money, and also find you a nice comfortable job, and if you're interested, I can even beseech my father to have a government position organized for you."

Eric smiled. "There's nothing to reconsider, young nobleman of the Heine family. I have spoken perfectly clear, it can't be that you have always been flattered from a young age, and cannot take even my tiny, tiny refusal?"

Intentionally saying words with some hints of provocation, he secretly prepared and waited for Easley to revolt.

This at the same time was also his test towards this nephew. By observing Easley's skill and conduct in dealing with the current situation, he will then give his score.

The six attendants simultaneously drew out the weapons by their bodies, transforming their identity of a servant to a guard. The magician began to chant a spell, the rogue Roland retreated to the midst of the forest in a flash, his body concealed and disappeared. Dixon firmly grasped a sword in his hand; the blade was the same fiery red color as his hair.

The priest was quite tensed and urged Easley to not hurt people, however out

of everyone, the fastest to act was actually that silent, most inconspicuous and low-key black haired youth in the palette squad. In nearly the moment Eric's provocative words fell, he had arrived behind Eric, the point of the blade pressed on Eric's back.

Although they seemed like young nobles playing about on an outing, there was no doubt about this squad's strength. As a rogue, Roland was not suitable for close confrontations. The moment there is a bud of an encounter, he will then go to a hidden place and find an opportunity to aid his companions or sneak an attack.

Although Eric looked to be only a wandering swordsman, this experienced, hardened rogue could vaguely sense that he was not simple, and so adopted the most cautious behavior.

As for the remaining people, the attendants acted to defend the family honor and the master, the redhead drew out his sword to protect his friend, and though the grey-haired priest was with Easley, he had always maintained a neutral position.

As for the fiercest black-haired youth, his identity was of Easley's follower.

Within the Heine family, for all the core members receiving the focus of the training, such as those like Easley and Eric, each person will have a bodyguard around the same age. Among the children of servants, the most gifted child will be chosen and from a young age stay with the little master and go to classes together, learn similar things, and even have the concept of loyalty instilled. When they are a little older, the follower will then always be shadowing the master, a shadow swordsman loyal to one man.

The follower's job is to protect the master, guard against the enemy's assassinations, and kill people in place of the master whenever necessary.

Yi Longlong looked over Eric's shoulder and met the young black-haired follower's ice cold, emotionless gaze, the green of the irises were very faint. Yi Longlong was frightened. Although she was sick in the past, she had still never met a person that indifferent and iron willed. She subconsciously nestled closer into Eric's warm embrace, the delicate white claws grabbed onto his collars. She asked with a small worried voice, "Will you be alright?"

With a sharp sword pressing against his back, Eric still remained perfectly calm. He bowed his head and patted Yi Longlong's paws, using a warm smile to comfort her and show he was fine.

The transformation all happened within a moment; Easley's stunned facial expression held only for a moment. Taking a deep breath, he once again recovered that polite smile. "Do not be discourteous to this gentleman, everyone come back... It's getting late, should probably go sleep, and we still have to set off tomorrow morning."

He finished speaking with some difficulty, then immediately returned to the camp and was the first to enter the tent.

With a single command, the black-haired follower immediately obeyed, retracting his sword in a flash, and straightaway followed Easley into the tent without saying a single word.

Dixon slowly sheathed his sword into his scabbard, the six attendants changed jobs from guards to servants, Roland walked out from the forest, and the priest was relieved.

Under Easley's single utterance, the tense atmosphere that was almost about to snap easily dissipated, however the estrangement between the two sides was clearly evident. The palette squad went back to their respective places to prepare to rest, and no one gave Eric another glance.

The palette squad was very disciplined. Having said they were to rest, it only took ten or so minutes and everything was quickly packed away. The majority of people went inside the tents to sleep, only two attendants were responsible for the night watch.

Eric sat against the bottom of the tree. Yi Longlong sat on the wooden box beside him, the height aligned with him just right. One of her paws grasped onto the edge of the box, the other paw lifted and waved at Eric. "Ay, are we still going along with that young master tomorrow?"

Chapter 14: I'm gonna bite you

Having beckoned twice, Eric still didn't react. Yi Longlong waved her paws, calling out his name. "Hey, Alvin! Alvin!"

There were still the two over there on night watch that haven't slept, and plus Eric had said before to keep his identity hidden, so Yi Longlong respected his wishes and didn't expose him.

However, after calling out twice, Eric still seemed to be spacing out and didn't pay any attention to the dragon. Left with no other choice, Yi Longlong was about to stretch out a hand and smack him awake, but her overly small size and overly short claws were her points of limitations. The distance was not even two feet away, if it was a human body instead, a casual stretch of the hand would be able to touch it, but even with her claws and feet put together, it was still not enough.

Left with no other choice, she resorted to jumping off the wooden box, then walked with tiny steps to Eric's side, stretching out a claw to tug on the hem of his clothes. "Hey, what's gotten you so absorbed in your thoughts?"

Suddenly coming into contact, Eric subconsciously flicked his wrist, his palm full with force, but at the same time he instantly regained his thoughts and remembered that Yi Longlong was the one accompanying him. The force instantly dispersed and turned into an outstretched hand, allowing Yi Longlong to stand on his palm, and following that he lifted her up, letting her sit on top of his shoulder. The two leaned their heads close and began to whisper.

"Not leaving of course." Eric spoke with certainty. "I tested him today, thinking that an outcome can be reached, however he actually managed to restrain himself from taking on a wandering swordsman. There are two possibilities for this type of circumstance: one, is that he is truly kind-hearted, and cannot bear hurting even a wandering swordsman; two, is that the Heine family education has been very successful, bringing him up to be a remarkable hypocrite. The temporary concession is for an even more flawless reaping in the coming days."

In order to better judge just exactly what type of person Easley was, he still

needed to interact with him for a few more days.

Yi Longlong nodded with a half-knowing look. Actually it didn't really matter where he went, since there was probably no way for Easley to go against his uncle, though after knowing that all the dragons on this world have been rid of, and even though she was not really familiar with those dragons, she still could not help but feel some fear and uneasiness. This uneasiness was even greater than the uneasiness she felt when she first came into contact with the outside world, as if there were ants crawling over her heart, worrying her all the time.

It wasn't that she was not scared at all, but Yi Longlong was feeling hesitant to bleat out words such as you must protect me well to Eric, so she did nothing but silently hold it in. Talking with Eric was only because she wanted to divert her attention.

As if he saw through her thoughts, Eric stretched out a finger and lightly tapped on her paws. He spoke with gentleness, "Do you know what I was thinking just then?"

"Ah? Weren't you spacing out?"

Eric gave a low laugh. "Of course not, I was thinking, since there are no more dragons now, from today, we must make changes to our journey, so I've decided, our next goal is to pay a visit to a few dragon knights across the lands. With their experience in dealing with dragons, perhaps they can help you grow big more quickly."

Yi Longlong carefully looked at the handsome outline of his face from one side, then once again looked down at her own claws. She silently turned and sharpened it a few times on a tree branch, then turned back to wave her claws menacingly. "You're not allowed to beat around the bush and tease about my body being small!"

"Okay, okay." Eric smiled till his eyes were crescents. He did not feel threatened by this tiny, tiny threat, but he also incidentally told Yi Longlong about the existence of the dragon knights.

It had already been said before; the dragons were the most powerful race across the lands. To become a dragon knight, one must wield an almighty powerful strength, and with this gain the acknowledgment from dragons, and

make a pact and so on.

Make a pact, instead of enslavement.

No one can enslave such a prideful, powerful race. Even if by luck a dragon were to be defeated, if there were attempts to enslave it, that dragon will bring its pride to its death.

As of Eric's knowledge from ten years ago, across the vast lands, the number of people who managed to make a pact with the dragon race did not exceed three.

Yi Longlong understood this point clearly. Even something like an aircraft carrier isn't something every person can possess.

However the number of people being called a dragon knight was not limited to these three people. Here, the branches from the dragon race have to be mentioned as well. Species such as drakes and land dragons shared partial similarities with the dragon's appearances, and so they had dragons in their names, only that they were not as powerful and prideful as the dragon race. Requiring only a certain amount of strength, it was perhaps enough to subdue a land dragon and have it ridden by humans.

These few types of races that seemed like dragons but were technically not dragons, were called dragons.

Although the pseudo-dragons' dragon knights were not as few as the real dragon knights, they were still slightly relevant with dragons. If one wants to subdue them, it was not something easy. Without actual numbers, pseudo-dragon knights numbered in the double digits across the lands.

Yi Longlong showed understanding once again: Even if it's a counterfeit aircraft carrier, the number of people who can afford it is also very few.

Following that, Eric awkwardly glanced at Yi Longlong, his tone euphemistic. "The reason why the number of dragon knights is so few is because the dragon race, even if it's a pseudo-dragon, their powerful strength is also difficult to subdue, but you...."

Yi Longlong lifted a claw to interrupt him, calmly saying, "I understand. You're trying to tell me, tractor... no, anyone can afford a wheelbarrow right... you don't think I'm gonna bite you?"

Because she remembered that there were no tractors on this land, she corrected herself in time.

The palette squad was very punctual with resting. The morning of the second day, they got out of bed right on time; the six servants busily packed away the tents, and even made breakfast for the young noble in the process. This group went on their road after this.

Behind the palette squad were two extra baggages. The dejected wandering swordsman carried a wooden box on his back. On top of the box sat a small white dragon shrunk beneath the leaves. The palette squad ahead were very cautious and careful, while one man and dragon were giggling with laughter while walking at the back, throwing the palette squad rather off balance.

However at this time, under no circumstances was Easley going to let Eric leave them. If Eric wanted to leave, he would think of ways to have him stay because he still had not given up on the dragon.

A peaceful journey till noon, the one or two beasts they came across were all done in by that silent follower of Easley. The squad stopped to take a break at noon. Roland, who Yi Longlong always could not restrain from discriminating against his profession, came walking towards them.

Chapter 15: The year back then and now

Even though it was only a temporary break in the afternoon, as the paragon of etiquette, Easley did not slack off as always. He paid attention to the finer details as he ate lunch and rested. Eric was watching him, as if he was looking at a time-transcending mirror and saw the reflection of his past self.

The Heine family is an extremely cold-blooded family. Although he is also a part of the family, Eric still cannot help but use this adjective to describe the place he grew up in.

This family has experienced the ups and downs of several centuries, lasted through two reigns and its scale has become tremendous. Nevertheless, it has still preserved its powerful and tenacious vitality, an abnormality without a say.

To maintain the strong vitality of trees, sick or decaying branches will need to be pruned without delay. The Heine family is also like this. The test for descendants in the family is such the knife that excises. If they do not want to be discarded like decaying branches and fallen leaves, the children of the family must work extremely hard towards progress.

To be on equal standings, there are obviously dirty habits. For those in the next generation incapable of being trained, later on they will be stripped of the Heine family name by a myriad of reasons. In order to avoid being eliminated, the members of the Heine family all exert their greatest diligence in exercising restraints and honing themselves. It uses such cold-blooded tactics to ensure the quality of the whole family.

In the Heine family, and especially among the core members, each and every one of them is attractive and well versed in both civil and military affairs. In social occasions they are rich noblemen with flawless decorum, in tales of adventures they are the fearless heroes of heroes.

The surface of the entire Heine family appears bright and glamorous, however hidden inside is a type of grim mounting feeling of danger and pressure. Not working hard will lead to abandonment. This admonition hovers over every person's mind.

The past Eric was brought up in this type of environment.

There are many rumors circulating around the world on his reason for leaving the family. Some say that he desired the freedom of living in an adventure and did not want to be constrained within the austere Royal City. Some say that he had lost the love of his life and so traveled far away. Regardless of the types of rumors, they all carried an incurable tint of romance, but only Eric and a small number of people alone knew the truth.

At the time, his father who was the patriarch of the family had begun to suffer a decline in health, and back then there were only himself and his brother, which is also Easley's father, within the next generation who had the greatest chance of succeeding the patriarch position. His brother dominated in his older age, being richer in experience and maturity. As for Eric, he was superior in terms of his incomparable reputation, as well as standing out in his accomplishments with the sword despite being in such a monstrous family like the Heine family.

Both he and his brother had their own supporters. Those who wanted to compete for the patriarch seat all possessed a certain level of strength. Not long after his rites of passage, he then discovered that his own brother had begun to faintly develop the buds of enmity towards him.

What sort of emotions he had felt at the time, Eric no longer wanted to recollect it. All in all, in the final conclusion, he engaged in a long talk over one night with his brother, entirely stepping down and handing over all the forces he possessed to his brother, and moreover from that point leaving the family until the next patriarch has been established.

When he left the Heine family, he did not bring anything with him besides his follower. The follower belongs to him alone, and indeed did not belong to the shadow warriors of the Heine family. Even if he were to be chased out of the Heine family, the follower will as always be his follower.

When he had just left the family, he and the follower still preserved the fundamental etiquettes. He was absolutely not slovenly with his attire, food and accommodation, however there was that one morning where he suddenly felt some weariness, and so did not want to get up on time, taking a nap.

Once a crack appears in the flawless etiquette, it cannot be undone later on.

Taking a nap once in a while turned into taking naps every single day, partaking food with one less cutlery finally led to straight use of bare hands. After two years, Eric began to feel having a follower with him was too bothersome, and so ordered him to do whatever as long as he was not in the same place as him.

And so, slowly and gradually Eric and his past self had become almost two completely different persons, and then afterwards, the brother became the patriarch but Eric already did not plan to return.

Besides not neglecting to hone his swordsmanship, there was still another matter Eric did.

He was searching for a person, the black shadow that killed Tahinia.

At that time he had just finished his rites of passage and organized a reunion with Tahinia, however as he approached the location of the reunion, he discovered mighty forces in combat ahead. Following that, the massive body of the silver dragon flew off from a small hill, a black shadow close behind giving chase.

That was the final time he saw Tahinia, as well as the first time seeing that black shadow that emanated a terrifying aura.

He could not see that black shadow clearly; their appearance, figure and even whether the other party was male or female he did not know, however, such immense power were numbered over the entire lands. He believed, as long as he searched unceasingly, the other party will be found in the end.

He gave up the rights of succession and also gave a condition to his brother, which was when required by him some time in the future, his brother will send men to help him kill a person.

Eric clearly understood, with the other party being capable of killing Tahinia, even if it was the current self, he was still not their opponent, and so he had never planned to wreak vengeance on that person by himself. Once that person is found, he will for the last time, execute the Heine family's influence.

Eric was quite rather absorbed in watching Easley. The child in front of his eyes was almost a replica of himself from the year back then. The Heine family seemed to specialize in creating these molds of rich noblemen, however beneath

the customary unchanging molds, every soul was still different. Because of this, Eric did not feel that his current predicament would suit Easley.

Easley was more fortunate than him. His father only had him as a single child. In the future he will not need to face the difficulties of brotherly strife; his father can shower all his care onto that one person.

Right when he was absorbed, Eric felt his sleeve being tugged. Gazing down, he saw the snow white dragon looking at him with an odd expression. "You're so engrossed in looking at that guy, don't tell me you've fallen in love with him."

This is incest and brokeback, the double-whammy taboos.

From the time when he sat and rested, Eric was always watching Easley. Where ever Easley went, his gaze would follow, and so Yi Longlong made a bold conjecture, carefully providing proof to the guilty party.

...Hold it in.

Eric once again tried very hard to suppress the urge to slay dragons.

At this time, Roland had walked over, his footsteps silent without a trace. He arrived very quickly in front of one man and one dragon, just in time to prevent a murder from happening.

"Sir," Roland gave a salute to Eric, "Just then when I was scouting ahead, I discovered a tower hidden within the forest."

This tower was very possibly the objective of the palette squad's journey – the evil magician's hideout.

1. **斷背** Duànbèi – Literally translates to Brokeback. See the movie/short story Brokeback Mountain, featuring gay cowboys.

Chapter 16: The youth on top of the tower

Originally, it was the palette squad's job to investigate and eradicate the evil magician along the way. There was no need to inform Eric, but Easley was not only unwilling to leave Yi Longlong for too long, he was also worried at the same time that Eric would take the opportunity to flee while they were fighting the evil magician, and so decided to bring him along inside the tower.

Having confirmed the tower was right ahead, the palette squad did not rush over there. After lunch, the people made their own preparations, someone was inspecting whether their sword could be smoothly drawn and someone was checking the crossbow, ropes and other equipment. The magician sat down and rested to preserve their peak energy condition.

Even till now, Easley still assumed Eric was a swordsman whose swordsmanship was not really up to par. Worried he was going to pose a hindrance for them in the tower or accidentally let Yi Longlong come into harm, he also made some preparations for Eric. Swordsmanship could not be trained in an instant, leaving no choice but to work with the equipment. He untied the saber by his waist, letting an attendant deliver it to Eric to use as a weapon.

Easley's saber was naturally a rarely-seen fine artifact. Eric secretly laughed inside, but still accepted the rich nobleman's 'generosity'. Yi Longlong lied over his shoulder, casually asking a question with some curiosity, "With the saber given to Alvin, then what sword are you going to use?"

This was the first time since the very first greeting that Yi Longlong spoke to Easley.

Easley froze, thereupon a smile of pleasant surprise surfaced on his face. "Please, uh, please do not worry for me."

It is seldom that a little dragon will speak to him of their own accord. Happy and surprised, Easley unexpectedly spoke with a stutter. Conscious of his faltering, he rushed to correct himself.

Yi Longlong's lips curled, retorting in a very small voice, "So did not."

How could she worry about this fellow who wanted to use money to barter for her?

Easley fixed his clothes in a very serious fashion, fastening the short silver-grey cloak that reached his waist. Afterwards he received from the follower's hands a long-shaped object wrapped in fine satin that was always carried on the back of the black-haired follower. He untied the ribbon bound around the satin; the first thing to appear was the beautiful blue sapphire sword hilt.

The famed sword Poem of Cerulean, of which the sword hilt was entirely carved out from sapphires.

The saber originally belonged to Eric, however when he left the Heine family, he entrusted it to his brother. This saber then went on to be bestowed to Easley.

It took an hour for all preparations to be ready to go. Only then did the palette squad turn towards the place Roland had mentioned, setting off towards the tower ahead.

Approximately half an hour's walk later, without knowing how many trees they have passed and how many vines blocking the way were brushed aside, the tower hidden within the dense forest finally appeared in front of Yi Longlong's eyes.

This was a tower that slightly resembled those tall towers within fairytales used especially for imprisoning princesses. It was around thirty meters tall and the body of the tower appeared cylindrical. From the base of the tower to the top, its width slightly shrank. The slits in between the smooth light-grey bricks were tightly sealed up, not even the thinnest blade could be pierced in; the black colored patterns engraved upon the body of the tower gave off a sense of ancient mystery.

The trees nearby were also very tall. The overgrown canopy rose above the heights of the tower; from far away, it was essentially impossible to tell what was here.

At the base of the tower was an arched wooden door; a lock made of brass hung from it. Roland came to a conclusion with just a single glance, "This door lock is very ordinary, however the placement of the lock is wrong, why is the lock on the outside? Can it be that the master of the tower is not within?"

He turned his head and looked towards Easley. After receiving the latter's approval, when he was just about to go ahead and attempt to pick the lock, a shadow suddenly stopped him.

The one blocking Roland was the priest in the squad whose behaviors had always not really stood out. His grey tidy hair draped over his shoulder; a serious expression shrouded over his delicate, feminine face. "I can sense it, behind this door are dark evil things, those things are extremely dangerous, it's best for you to not get too close."

With a priest within the squad, he would naturally have some special use. The other people did not dare to disbelieve his words. Roland speedily withdrew his hand, asking, "Then how should we do it? Do you reckon you can deal with whatever's behind the door?"

The priest hesitated and then shook his head, "My abilities are limited, and the things behind the door are too powerful. I cannot purify them, but I can sense that these things only amass at the lower part of the tower. The top is still clean."

Roland shifted his gaze up, and saw that somewhere two-thirds of the way up the tower there opened a window that was almost as tall as a person. He suddenly sneered. "So it's like this. I understand now, this door at the bottom is actually just a guise. If someone was to barge in, they will be caught in the trap down there, the real entrance is actually that window."

Knowing the correct method of entering, the palette squad immediately came up with battle strategies. The body of the tower was too smooth and difficult to climb, so Roland used the crossbow and shot a grappling hook connected to a rope towards the edge of that window. After it caught on he gave it a tug, tied the other end of the rope onto a tree nearby the stone tower, and after ascertaining the sturdiness of the suspension with a few pulls, he lithely climbed along the rope to the window on the tower.

With his body squatted at the window's opening, Roland peered inside, then turned back and made an everything's fine hand signal. Like this, Easley and the others went up in succession. Of course, with all the education Easley had undergone, he would absolutely not climb in a way similar to other people. He

stepped once on the ground and nimbly jumped up. When his jump was mid-air, his leg extended out, stepping once on the center of the rope, and borrowing the rebounding force of the rope directly jumped onto the entrance of that window.

Throughout the whole process his movements were smooth and elegant, lithe like a swallow. Obviously he did not put his all in this jump.

This made Yi Longlong slightly change her perception of him: Looks like this brat isn't one of those embroidered pillows that can only put up an attitude. At the very least there's still some real substance.

Eric placed the wooden box onto the ground, scooped up Yi Longlong and like Easley, also jumped straight to the window, only he did not even borrow the use of the rope, arriving quietly without a sound at the window of the tall tower.

Right at this moment, Easley had just jumped down from the window. He turned around wanting to call Eric up, but suddenly saw that the wandering swordsman had already followed up at some unknown point of time. The white dragon safely lied within his arms, as if it was reclining on top of a comfortable bed.

Seeing Yi Longlong, Easley felt some jealousy, and even forgot to ponder over how Eric could follow up without alerting him.

Yi Longlong's two paws hung over one of Eric's shoulders. She looked around with worry. She had lived through two lives, but this was still the first time going not through the doors but through the windows, giving her the illusion of breaking in and stealing.

The internal of the tower was structured into floors, with a staircase linking above and below. Very quickly, the palette squad thus found their target. A black cloak wearing fellow who looked up to no good was currently concocting powdered drugs.

Sighting that magician, Roland got ready to go forth and question him. Negotiation was one of his duties, but Roland's silver tongue did not get to be displayed, because the moment that magician saw them, he immediately launched an attack.

Just like how it is described within all the tales of legendary adventures, the

palette squad and this fellow engaged in a fierce battle. The paints were heroic and fearless, finally defeating him in the end.

Yi Longlong covered her eyes with her paws with some fear, but still could not resist curiously peeking through the slits. She was uneasy from beginning to the end, as for where this uneasiness came from, she had no way of knowing.

The process of the fight was very splendorous. The moment the magician collapsed was the moment Roland landed his final attack. He spun to the back of the magician, piercing the dagger into his body.

Yi Longlong received a fright; her whole body shrunk into Eric's embrace.

A person really got killed, that stab was the real deal. She originally thought the paints would at least seize the magician for questioning, but did not expect them to act that swiftly.

No, to be exact, the only one acting swiftly was Roland. Easley was quite dissatisfied with Roland's own actions, however he also felt in his heart that this magician was not any honest person. Giving it a think, in the end he did not reprimand Roland on this matter.

Sheathing the gaudy Poem of Cerulean back into the scabbard, Easley lightly exhaled. Confirming the whole squad did not sustain any serious injuries, he ordered other people to first manage their injuries. Easley did not take heed of his own still bleeding back of his hand, only eagerly looked towards Dixon.

The blond and redhead youths met each other's eyes, their eyes shone with happiness. The two of them stretched their hands out and clapped with force in mid-air, creating a loud crisp smack.

At this point of time, Easley was finally removed from that stiff model etiquette; his smile finally brimmed with some rare sincerity.

The black haired follower went up, checked the magician's pulse and ascertained the evil magician had already passed on. After that, an attendant moved the magician to one side.

According to customs, everyone then searched everywhere, acquiring the rewards for this journey.

With a corpse on the side, Yi Longlong was very unsettled, but Eric's expression was the same as usual and still that calm, as if this was a very normal occurrence. This made Yi Longlong unrestrainedly suspect, can it be that this world is this terrifying?

Not wanting to look at the corpse any further, Yi Longlong let Eric carry her around and sightsee. After some time, she heard a yell coming from above. It seemed to be a cry from the priest by the sounds of it. She tugged on Eric's collar, the latter immediately grasped her meaning and rushed up.

Going up the stairs to the topmost floor of the tower, Yi Longlong saw the priest, and the cause of the priest's cry – that was a youth.

1. 绣花枕头Xiùhuā zhěntou – Embroidered pillow, a metaphor for an outwardly attractive but actually worthless person (as according to Dict.cn)

Chapter 17: Hundred billion stars

The entire topmost floor of the tower was a large room. Within the room were some home furnishings, with tables, chairs, bookshelves and the likes. There were even a few flower pots placed on top of the table. All around the stone walls were square windows that let the wind and light through. A big round bed was placed by one of those windows and on the middle of the soft and snow white down sat a youth.

The moment Yi Longlong saw the youth she felt familiarity from the heart, because from the time she had arrived in this world, this was the first time seeing a black-haired, black-eyed human.

Just by the color of his hair and pupils alone, it suddenly made Yi Longlong think back to the environment from her previous life.

Although Easley's follower was also black-haired, his eyes however were colored green and his facial features were rather pronounced, unlike the softness and beauty of this youth in front of her eyes.

The youth's body was covered by a thin black robe and sat at the center of the bed with his hands wrapped around his knees, his two white bare feet stretching out from beneath the robe. The straight pitch-black hair flowed down like a waterfall, spreading across the bed. His lips were dainty like the petals of a blossoming rose, his eyes exquisitely carved like a black crystal.

A shiny black metal ring enclosed each of his wrists and ankles; the rings were connected to thick iron chains that dragged and extended from the bed to the floor, and finally the other side of the chains merged into the thick walls of the tower.

The thick shackles gave off the icy chill of metal; in contrast to the thin pale-white wrists that looked about to snap at any moment, it made the youth look even more weak and pitiful.

Restricted by the shackles and chains, although the youth could get off the bed and walk around a little, he was still unable to reach a place further away. Not to mention leaving this tower, the farthest distance he could walk to was the

entrance to the stairs where Yi Longlong and the others were currently standing.

-Tall tower, a dark energy, an evil magician, and an imprisoned Adonis, this kind of situation, no matter how you looked at it, carried an implication of treachery.

The tall towers within fairytales always imprisoned princesses, but this tall tower did not have princesses, only a youth that was beautiful beyond words. Different from Easley's noble charm, the youth's beauty was silent and serene. Deep misery seemed to pool within his crystal clear eyes.

Everything in front of their eyes clearly stated that this youth was imprisoned by the evil magician. Having thought this, Easley was more at ease, thinking back that Roland killing that magician was not too excessive.

Although so many people came at once to the top floor of the tower, the youth seemed to not completely take notice. He only looked outside the windows in a trance, not giving them even a single glance.

Roland went forth and examined the shackles on the youth's body. He discovered that the shackles were made from a meld of a few rare tough metals, the texture was extremely sturdy, and these shackles essentially did not give him any room to show his lock picking skills as the keyholes of the shackles have long been casted away.

The priest went up and looked with pity at the youth, "Please do not be afraid, we will immediately let you gain freedom."

But the youth remained unaware of the words. He appeared to be completely separated from the outside world; what people and what things were happening outside, there was no way for him to know.

Facing this inattentive and uncooperative rescuee, the whole palette squad was quite befuddled. A moment later, Easter made the decision: no matter what, first rescue the person then decide things later on. Perhaps this youth was tortured by the evil magician for a long time, it's possible the person has already become close to an imbecile.

With no way to unlock the chains, cutting the shackles was the only option left. Easley drew out his famed sword Poem of Cerulean, raised it high and sliced it

towards the chains that dragged on the floor. He thought he would be able to break it with a slice, but the blade cut on the chains and produced a few sparks, leaving only a very faint scar on it.

Easley subconsciously looked back at Yi Longlong. The little white dragon unblinkingly recorded his failed act into her eyes.

It was seen.

The model rich nobleman thought vexingly. That action just then, I would definitely be deemed useless right.

Easley still did not have the intention of giving up Yi Longlong. Instead, he planned on starting to build a good image of himself with the dragon from now on, and try his best to show off his most perfect side. When he obtains Yi Longlong in the future, it will be easier to get along.

The palette squad would have never expected this: even the evil magician has been defeated, but they were stumped by an iron chain. At this moment, an attendant came up holding a sheaved rapier in his hands.

The body of that sword was narrower than ordinary blades. Enclosed in a black leather sheathe, the hilt was engraved with minutely detailed patterns, as if it was embedded with many stars, faintly flickering tiny dots of silvery lights. According to the attendant, they found this sword in a place that was very well hidden away, but none of them were able to unsheathe the sword, and so brought it to Easley to deal with it.

Hearing the attendant say this, Easley was instantly interested and had Roland, who was the most experienced in identifying treasures within the squad, to come over. The latter carefully identified for a while, and said with some uncertainty, “If I remember correctly, I seem to have read the introduction of this sword from some book of legends. This is the legendary famed sword Hundred Billion Stars that had been missing from seven hundred years ago, it can slice through anything. Should this sword really turn out to be Hundred Billion Stars, it should be able to cut apart these chains.”

“However-” Just before Easley moved to unsheathe the sword, Roland added in, “there’s still an unrecorded rumor that exists only in folklores. The Hundred Billion Stars is a sword with its own preferences. Only pure immaculate maidens

can draw the sword from the sheathe and use it.”

In other words, everyone on the scene was male. First disregarding the matter of purity, the crux of it was that none of them was a ‘maiden’.

Sure enough, the sword was passed around each person’s hands besides Eric. No one could draw it out.

Everyone looked at each other with consternation: Do they really have to go out of this sea of trees, and bring a pure maiden here to draw the sword and rescue people?

Seeing the paints in the palette at a loss with the sword, Eric lightly coughed to attract their attention. “I think I can give it a try.”

The moment his voice fell, everyone’s gazes swiveled to Eric, their expressions all horrified in the midst of surprise. Easley widened his resplendent blue eyes, his handsome face full of disbelief. “You...are a maiden?”

Or is it that pure immaculate type?

Yi Longlong also warbled the same way, “So I’ve been mistaken all along. You’re not actually a big uncle, but a big aunty huh.... uh ah, I mean sister.” Catching sight of Eric’s expression of wanting to slay a dragon, she rapidly corrected herself.

Eric took a few deep breaths, thereby pacifying his temper. He felt that he will one day be driven to early onset of aging by the little fella within his arms, but right now rescuing people is urgent. He endured it and did not dispute with the junior. “I’ve also heard a bit about the Hundred Billion Stars’ rumors, although it’s said that the wielder of the sword is a pure immaculate maiden, it has never limited the race of the maiden. It just so happens, the one in my arms, counts as a young female from the dragon race in every respect right?”

He looked down with a chuckle, his finger tapping on Yi Longlong’s head.

Author’s notes: (scratches claws) An Adonis imprisoned on top of a tall tower, by chance I’ve wanted to write such a character from very early on~~~After writing it my heart is giddy.

1. 美少年Měishàonián – Handsome youth, or bishonen. The online dictionaries go

with Adonis, Greek god of beauty and desire.

Chapter 18: 07

With this, the palette squad's gazes instantly moved a fair bit down with a *shashasha*, focusing onto her body like spot lights.

Pure immaculate maiden... uh, dragon.

Being fixated under so many pairs of eyes, Yi Longlong began to quail. She felt extremely uncomfortable and itched to hide away immediately. However, she knew that rescuing a person was the most urgent matter right now. Other things were not as important as this.

"That..." Yi Longlong pawed at the clothing on Eric's arm, "I'll give it a try, if it doesn't work out you can't blame me."

Suddenly, Eric intentionally revealed a look of dawning realization, "You're so lacking in confidence, could it be that you're not a female dragon? Speaking of it, I've never properly confirmed your sex."

Very obviously, he still bore a grudge over the words "big aunty" just then.

"You dare confirm, I'll bite you to death." Although her voice was soft, her tone was ferocious.

Regardless of how embarrassed she felt, in the end Yi Longlong let Eric place her down, and in the same manner, Easley put down the assumedly Hundred Billion Stars rapier to let Yi Longlong retrieve it. A crowd stood in a circle and in the middle, a distance of two, three meters away was a small white dragon and a sword. Everyone's stares were completely focused, desiring to witness the moment the famed legendary sword is drawn with their own eyes.

Yi Longlong stood up on two feet and took a step forward, the lower hem of her coat swaying. Her feet wore tiny shoes weaved from the silvery blue grass, wrapping roundly on the claws of her feet, creating a very light sound when stepping on the ground. Then, she noticed the surroundings were too quiet. Raising her head to look around, she saw only fellows who could be considered giants in comparison to her height encircling her. Just about everyone's gazes

zeroed in.

Yi Longlong stopped her steps. The small round grass shoes scrubbed on the ground. She spoke very quietly, “Can you all turn around... if you watch me like this, I’ll get nervous and quite possibly be unable to draw it out.”

The underlying meaning of these words was: Still looking? Keep looking and I won’t draw it!

Yi Longlong already spoke to this degree. Everyone else had no choice but to relent. Exchanging looks, the rich nobleman set an example by being the first to turn around. The rest of the people followed suit and made the same motions. Finally, Yi Longlong’s gaze rested on Eric. “And you, the same.”

Eric chuckled with amusement and nodded, fulfilling her request in the end.

Yi Longlong let out a great sigh of relief: No one is watching this time.

Her steps were light and fast, springing to the side of the sword placed on the ground. Yi Longlong extended two paws, the left and right clinched together to just barely hold the hilt. Following that, a very comfortable feeling similar to soaking in a spring seeped into her paws, as if energy was being poured into the tiny body. Yi Longlong lightly pulled outwards. The hum of the sword reverberated long and slowly throughout the air. It was far from clear and melodious, nor low and hoarse, as if it had already been like so from ancient times and will remain like so, far into the future.

The instant the blade left the sheath, a cold and distant star-like radiance burst forth. Within that moment, Yi Longlong felt as if she was looking at the night skies, a hundred billion stars congregating in one place, mysterious and resplendent.

A hundred billion stars reappeared here.

Countless specks of silver stars as fine as dust seemed to dissipate from the blade. They dispersed into the air then very quickly disappeared.

Yi Longlong was practically bedazzled by the sight. It took quite some time before she remembered what she was supposed to do. She lifted the long sword that was taller than her and walked towards the chained Adonis. After a few steps, she thought that she looked as if she was about to slaughter someone.

What to do if the other person gets frightened? And so, she changed from lifting to dragging, slowly dragging the sword to over there. The tip of the sword scratched along the ground, leaving behind a crooked line.

Yi Longlong jumped onto the bed. She ran for a few steps, her feet sinking unevenly into the soft quilts and arrived at the side of the youth. Looking from a closer distance, she further discovered that this youth was exceedingly beautiful. His skin was smooth and pale, without a single blemish to be seen. His brows were pretty and elegant, the eyes glittering and crystal clear. The thick eyelashes were like a fan. As for his hair, it was the same jet-black as ebony wood, and so smooth that it could surpass Rejoice, piss off Head & Shoulders, sweep away Pantene and step all over Sunsilk; it can be directly used in an ad for the most effective shampoo.

“That, this one, may I trouble you to stretch your hands and feet out. I’m helping you cut the shackles off and worried about my hands slipping and hurting you.”

Aware that the youth was a real living person, Yi Longlong got embarrassed after continuously staring for a while. She turned her head, shifting her gaze to the youth’s shackled wrists.

She had thought the youth would remain oblivious and unaware, but after hearing her words, the youth unexpectedly moved. Although there was not much of an expression on his face, he obediently reached out a hand. Light blue veins could essentially be seen on the thin and pale wrist.

Yi Longlong made mental preparations. Aiming at the shackle by the youth’s wrist, she sliced down with her might, akin to chopping vegetables. The thick and sturdy iron ring broke, the situation vastly different from when Easley used the Poem of Cerulean.

Although she was the one controlling the sword, Yi Longlong was shocked by this result: This rapier’s sharpness is just a bit too much.

Confirming the effectiveness of the Hundred Billion Stars, Yi Longlong went ahead and with the cooperation of the Adonis, with three slashes, the shackles completely came off with unexpected ease from the youth’s body.

Yi Longlong put down the sword. She was still reluctant to part with the bed,

and so simply sat down, her tiny body rubbing against it. The duvet beneath the body was soft. If it wasn't for the youth still on the bed, she almost wanted to hug the blankets and roll around the bed.

This is truly a comfortable bed.

It would be great to live here for a few days.

With this thought in mind, Yi longlong tugged at the hems of the youth's cloak. "Ay, may I know your name?"

First, get to know each other, and then ask to borrow the bed to sleep.

"Name?" The youth watched her, his eyes slightly puzzled. The rose petal lips opened and closed, lightly repeating this word.

It can't be that he's truly dumb? Yi Longlong thought with sympathy, but still patiently explained. "It means, what do other people call you? For example, I'm called Yi Longlong, that big uncle over there who keeps thinking he's not a big uncle is E-...Alvin."

"07." The youth figured out her meaning, and replied, "My name is 07."

1.柔顺得简直能赛过飘柔气死海飞丝, 横扫潘婷脚踩夏士莲, 直接就能当效果最好的洗发液广告 -Rejoice, Head & Shoulders, Pantene and Sunsilk are all major brands of shampoo.

Chapter 19: Face of Deceit

07?

What kind of name is that?

To use numbers as names, it wasn't something unheard of for Yi Longlong, for example Zhang San, Li Si, but for Zhang Lingsan, Li Lingsi, this was rather rare.

"That's not a name, it's a custom serial number." When Yi Longlong cut apart the shackles, Eric had already turned around and said so while observing the Adonis. "It's probably created by the person who imprisoned him here."

He was not clear what the serial number was for, but he believed that it was not for any happy reason.

The Adonis glanced at Eric, blinking his eyes. "Serial number?"

He was like a completely clueless child. Whenever he chanced across a new word, he would lightly repeat it again.

Seeing the youth like this, everyone felt even more sympathy for him, thinking that he must have been imprisoned by the magician for too long and even lost the basic intellect.

"07, 07, it's hard to get used to calling this," Already succumbing to the soft temptation beneath her body, Yi Longlong lowered her head and rubbed her face along the soft blankets, staring at the youth with a tilted head. "Don't you have any other names? How about changing it to another?"

Should they continue calling him by the serial number, she was worried the youth will keep remembering the suffering he received in the tower. Although changing names does not signify forgetting all events in the past, it can at least count as a new beginning.

"Other names?" The youth copied Yi Longlong, his head also tilted. A person and dragon sat with their heads tilted, his eyes deep and sullen, the beautiful face carrying a type of especially pure befuddlement. Other than that, there were no other expressions. "What?"

Yi Longlong suddenly felt as if she was teaching a child to speak. Regardless of what she said, the other party would earnestly repeat it with some doubt. If the person in front of her eyes was really a small babbling child, then that could be brushed aside. However, he was a youth already seventeen, eighteen years of age, but his mind was still like a child's...

A dragon and a person engaged in a lively chat, one voice tender and childish and the other in a naive tone. They exhausted a great deal of time in discussion before they finally confirmed the youth's name was Lin Qi. Yi Longlong also finally let out a sigh of relief. She hurriedly jumped off the bed and didn't dare to ask to borrow the bed from Lin Qi. Should Lin Qi ask her back what is a bed, why is she borrowing a bed and continue pestering her like this, she will inevitably be driven crazy.

The name Lin Qi came out of Yi Longlong's own self-interest. The youth's black hair and black eyes gave her a sense of familiarity, and so to add to the closeness, she gave him an even more personable name. Since as long as the two words "Lin Qi" are not written down, other people would only attribute the enunciation to its significance and not find any problems with it.

When she jumped off the bed, Yi Longlong carried along the Hundred Billion Stars. She returned the narrow sword to its sheath with great care and then walked to Easley, intending to return this rapier back to him. Although she was the one who had drawn the sword, it did not mean she held all the rights over it. Even then, as a dragon she would not have that many opportunities to use a sword in the future.

While Yi Longlong was engaged in a messy conversation with Lin Qi, the others were not being idle.

At this time, Easley was standing at one side, conversing with the priest on what to do with Lin Qi later on.

The attendants from the palette squad went downstairs with Roland to retrieve the loot. The black haired follower and Dixon were recuperating in the same spot.

Eric leaned against the window, looking out in a leisurely manner while yawning at the same time.

Before Yi Longlong could get to Easley, she saw an attendant running up yelling. His whole face and body was covered with fresh blood, the entire person extremely discomposed. Just when he reached the top, he then collapsed on one knee onto the floor.

Seeing this situation, Easley's facial expression greatly contorted. "What's the matter?"

Enduring the pain, the attendant chokingly explained. From his words, Easley found out that Roland, who had accompanied the attendants downstairs, had taken advantage of the situation and sneak attacked while everyone was off-guard, and following their defeat he took all the loot and fled just like that!

The attendant giving the report was the most skilled among the attendants. He was one of the people who wrangled with Roland for a while, and also because of this, his injuries were the lightest and could still rush up with great difficulty to report to Easley.

Hearing this matter, Easley no longer had time to think about the little dragon he wanted to obtain. He immediately ordered Dixon and the black haired follower to make preparations and go with him to give chase, only leaving behind the priest to heal the injured within the tower.

He did not mind losing the loots, but Roland's actions not only violated their employment contract, it also damaged his dignity. This was something Easley absolutely could not forgive.

Before leaving, Roland removed the rope used to climb to the entrance, but regardless of whether it was Dixon, the black haired follower or Easley, the three of them were all quick and vigorous, and jumping down proved not a problem with their own abilities.

Leaping out of the tower, the black haired follower found Roland's footprints on the ground and simultaneously discovered the attendants knocked unconscious outside the tower, the luggage tossed about in a mess. Making sense of the directions, the three people then headed towards the forest in pursuit.

Throughout the whole process, Eric remained leisurely standing by the windows. After the three palette members left, the priest cast a simple healing

spell over the attendant who gave the report. When the priest went downstairs to heal other people, Eric then turned his head around, laughing as he watched the attendant lying on the floor. “The people are gone already, aren’t you going to get up?”

Yi Longlong watched with astonishment. After hearing Eric’s words, the bloodied attendant who just then spoke with frailty flipped up and steadily stood on the ground.

“I long knew you weren’t simple.” That attendant gave a composed smile. The voice emitted actually belonged to Roland’s. He lifted his hand and tore his face, somehow lifting off a black-colored mask. When that mask was worn, it had that attendant’s appearance, however when taken off, the facial features, hair and eye colors beneath the mask reverted to its original appearance along with the mask.

Purple hair and purple eyes, and a scar that looked like a line of tears beneath the eye.

The mask’s name was Face of Deceit. Roland had obtained this mask from an antique collector. This mask was a mysterious tool with magical powers. It only required a drop of blood on the mask, then by applying it onto the face, a person could transform into the appearance of the owner of that drop of blood. The effect’s duration was very short, with only fifteen minutes of effectiveness, but for Roland this was already sufficient.

Firstly, Roland had stunned the other attendants unconscious, removed that person’s clothing and put them on himself, wore the mask, then pretending to be injured, falsely claimed he had escaped to draw Easley and other people away.

1. 比如张三李四, 但张零三, 李零四Bǐrú zhāngsānlísì, dàn zhāng líng sān, lǐ líng sì-Zhang and Li are common Chinese surnames. 3 is pronounced san, 4 is si, 0 is ling.
2. 林琦Lín qí-The name given to the mysterious youth by Yi Longlong. This is sort of a homophone of 07 in Mandarin: Líng qī. Lin Qi sounds like a typical Chinese name, and aptly given since Yi Longlong thinks Lin Qi looks Asian with black hair and black eyes.

Chapter 20: A heinous sin

"I'm very curious, just what exactly are you about to do?" Eric quizzed without hurry.

Roland leisurely stripped off his outer garments covering his body and then went downstairs again to retrieve the hidden bag of tools and dagger. He came back up shouldering the magician they had just killed, then answered with composure, "Obviously, there are things here that interests me more."

Roland was set apart from Easley and the others. He did not believe Eric to be just an ordinary dejected swordsman. To be this deep in the woods completely free of injuries was evidence enough to demonstrate his strength, but after luring Easley and the others away, he did not fear facing Eric by himself because his own strength also greatly surpassed the level he had shown in front of everyone.

He was not any ordinary rogue. He was the king of rogues in the profession.

He lured Easley away not because he was afraid of him, but because he did not want to cause a conflict with him. For example, if he carelessly injured this youth, it could possibly spite the Heine family. Although he was not afraid, it was still better to reduce as many inconveniences as possible.

This time while coming forward with the squad, on the surface he appeared to be hired by Easley, but in reality previous to this, he had also signed a contract. The Heine family had hired him to observe and record the performance of Easley after he entered the sea of forest, as well as to test him at random.

Everything he had currently done did not really count as violating the first contract. While creating a situation to test Easley, he could also obtain the things he coveted along the way.

However, the person Roland was facing was Eric. Eric was also confident in his strength and felt he could handle the rogue, and so let Easley and the others take the bait and give chase while he watched the rogue go up and down carrying things.

After carefully placing the corpse on the floor, Roland turned around and went downstairs again, retrieving the artifacts he had previously hidden away.

He had identified the collections in the tower, and besides the Hundred Billion Stars, there were also a few other legendary artifacts that had their information only written down in ancient records. Any one of these artifacts posed a great temptation, enough to make it worth going against the contract to seize it.

Of course, in order to avoid troubles, he did not mention the names of the other artifacts besides the Hundred Billion Stars.

However, the things that interested Roland were not limited to these.

He flipped the dead magician's corpse over with the back facing upwards and untied the other party's garments to inspect. Yi Longlong gave a gasp of astonishment and then subsequently quickly turned around, not looking at Roland.

Roland noticed Yi Longlong's behavior and felt it was quite strange, but he did not pause. He tore apart the outer garments of the evil magician while casually asking Eric, "What's up with her? Scared of the corpse?"

After several days of interaction with her, Eric had already basically figured out Yi Longlong's thinking patterns. He could tell what she was thinking just by looking at the angle her tail was cocked. He replied without hesitation, "She thought you were about to express your admiration for this corpse gentleman. As a demure female, she felt very embarrassed and turned her head around to avoid seeing an extremely horrifying scene."

Eric was rather euphemistic with his words. It took quite a while for Roland to automatically translate it in his head: Yi Longlong thought he was into necrophilia and enjoyed violating corpses in front of bystanders, so the dragon maiden turned around, lest she saw...

Not only did Yi Longlong turn around, she even used two tiny paws to cover her eyes. It was a typical show of looking away from indecency, demonstrating that Eric was not talking nonsense.

Roland's face turned pale then darkened again. He slowly said with gritted teeth, "I'm undoing this fellow's clothes because I wanted to check whether or

not he was human.”

Yi Longlong was startled and turned around after hearing his words. She surprisingly discovered that the texture of the skin was very rigid, not at all like a normal person – although she was in the hospital in her previous life for that long and was the one being treated, she did have some knowledge about some things, of which included human anatomy. With the clothes removed, Yi Longlong discovered that the anatomy of this “corpse” had some slight differences from normal humans, and the wound on his back did not have much blood. Instead, a glint of metal could be seen through the wound.

Roland pointed at the back of the “evil magician”, saying, “I accidentally discovered this during our fight with him. This magician is fundamentally not an actual human. He is more akin to an extremely intricate crafted puppet. They possess a human appearance, and some of them can even think and make simple judgments, however in the end their behavior is still controlled by the master’s orders...Do you know about puppets, should I give an explanation?”

Yi Longlong shook her head. This was not hard for her to comprehend. These so-called puppets were equivalent to the androids from the stories in her previous life, and even the type that had a little bit of intelligence.

She looked at Eric again. He did not seem to be fazed at all. Yi Longlong recalled Eric’s relaxed attitude back when Roland killed this puppet, suddenly realizing that Eric had already known this evil magician was actually a fake.

Roland smiled. “If I didn’t guess wrong, the master of the tower has really gone out. He left this puppet magician to guard his home, and may have also relayed the orders to attack all foreign intruders. This can explain his attacks. I rushed an attack to his back, destroying his processing core, which counts as killing him... This type of puppetry is a rarity on these lands. Not to exaggerate, but this corpse is practically as valuable as the famed sword Hundred Billion Stars.”

After ascertaining the “evil magician” was indeed a puppet as per his guesses, Roland was satisfied and put the clothes back onto the corpse. He then looked at Yi Longlong again.

“I’m not like the young nobleman.” Although Roland’s eyes were looking at Yi Longlong, he was actually speaking to Eric, “Are you actually unaware or

pretending to be ignorant? Putting the dragon aside, you even wastefully used the extremely rare and valuable silver blue grass that only grows under special conditions on weaving clothes for her. With her dolly get-up, it's enough to buy a village."

It was all fine when Roland was speaking, but his last utterance gave Yi Longlong a shock. "This grass, is it really that valuable?"

When she saw that it was everywhere by the lake where she was born, she had thought it was extremely common.

If the ones on her body could buy a village, then in this year alone she wasted...

Chapter 21: The allegedly priceless treasure

While Yi Longlong was feeling the utmost heart ache over it, Eric didn't even show the slightest reaction and only said with a smile, "So what?"

Actually from the moment he had seen her, he had already recognized the grass she used for clothing. Besides learning about etiquette and swordsmanship, as a core member in the Heine family hierarchy, being knowledgeable was also an indispensable part of the education. In addition to that, with Eric wandering about these past four years, his knowledge could possibly rival Roland's.

However, he did not take this matter to heart at all.

He was originally born of nobility. He did not care much about rare items, and as he continued wandering these years, the worldly value of items also decreased in his eyes. To him, the only difference between a single copper and ten thousand gold was that the latter was slightly heavier; toting it around would be rather inconvenient. Between an ordinary iron sword and the Hundred Billion Stars, the feeling of using either was all the same.

And so, after he saw the silver blue grass on Yi Longlong's body, although he had known in his head that it was especially valuable, he had never prevented Yi Longlong at all from wasting it and had never considered gathering some for himself.

So what if it can buy a whole country? The child of a deceased dragon is far more valuable than the whole world. She can use it however she wants, play with it however she wants. Don't even mention heart ache, he was too lazy to even say anything about it.

There was a disparity in experience between Eric and Yi Longlong, and as for Roland, they were in separate realms.

Yi Longlong looked at Eric with astonishment as he slowly made his way towards her. He bent down and opened his arms to her, just like how it had been done many times in the past. His long slender arms seemed very firm; it looked as if it was harboring a small safe haven.

After she had stepped into the outside world and learnt the actual values of lots of items, Yi Longlong suddenly realized just how fortunate she was.

If the person who had barged into the lake wasn't Eric but someone covetous instead, given how valuable Yi Longlong was among this piece of land, she would definitely be sold off, the silver blue grass by the lake and on her body would be claimed by the other party, and they may even disturb Tahinia's peace at the bottom of the lake... This massive temptation was not something every person could resist.

Luckily it was Eric.

Yi Longlong felt this wholeheartedly at this very moment.

Although this guy enjoys teasing her height and has a bad habit of easily losing his directions... Yi Longlong suddenly felt the greatest relief. Those villages have already been wasted; regret won't bring it back anyway. The more important thing is that she did not lose something even more precious.

Just as she was about to put her paws on Eric's arms, Yi Longlong looked over Eric's shoulder and saw Roland at the back thrusting a sword towards Eric while he was turned away!

Roland was very swift; even the sound of wind was compressed into a very small area. His purple eyes were piercing cold and shone with a predatory glint. Although Yi Longlong could follow his movements with her eyes, her mouth wasn't quick enough to give a warning. She could only stare as Roland instantly closed in behind Eric.

However, the sound that followed wasn't the sound of a dagger piercing into a body, but the sound of metals crossing each other.

One of Eric's hands remained outreached towards Yi Longlong. His other hand held a cracked iron sword, blocking Roland's attack.

Yi Longlong could detect Roland's movements. Her vision surpassed her previous expectations, but she could not perceive when Eric made a move at all.

Roland's strike missed. His retreat was even quicker than his advance. Borrowing the momentum from Eric's counterattack, he was almost floating, floating to the walls in an instant.

Astonished, he looked at Eric as if he was staring at a monster.

Eric did not turn around to look at him. He sheathed his sword with indifference, then continued to smile at Yi Longlong, “Let’s go. While that brat hasn’t yet returned, we can sneak away.”

He will protect this child.

This conviction had never been this clear before.

Any grown man can capture Yi Longlong in such a weak state. Even if she cannot be ridden at this time, powerful families can train her from when she’s young, and when she matures she can be left for the descendants to use.

Eric himself had once lived in a standard family of nobles. He was very clear on the methods used by authorities. Just by being the last living dragon in the world alone, it was enough to make people flock.

He had even decided not to expose his identity or borrow the Heine family’s influence. Should he reveal weaknesses, it was possible for family benefits to outweigh his personal wishes. The Heine family would use various reasons to wrest the rights for raising Yi Longlong. Once Yi Longlong falls into their hands, it would be difficult to take her back.

Seeing Eric win almost without breaking a sweat, Yi Longlong joyously stretched her paws out and placed them on top of Eric’s hands that were multiple times bigger than hers. Using some force, she jumped onto his arms and made a face at Roland over the shoulder. “You sneaked, scoundrel! Really shameful!”

Roland felt very wronged in face of the criticisms being voiced in a naïve and child-like tone. “I’m a rogue, my specialization is assassination of course. Did you really expect me to face a swordsman head on?” This job discrimination is too unreasonable.

Eric single-handedly lifted Yi Longlong and turned around. Roland immediately put his guard up. He placed away his dagger and instead retrieved several items from the cloth pouch tied by his waist. They were all tools he was used to using. He was prepared to counter the other party’s attack at any time.

Eric didn’t go over there. Instead, he only eyeballed the dimensions of the

nearest window, carried Yi Longlong over there and prepared to jump out.

He also did not take heed of the Hundred Billion Stars that Yi Longlong had already placed down. It was fine to leave it for either Easley or Roland.

Yi Longlong tugged at his sleeve questioningly. "You're not gonna capture that guy?"

Eric shook his head, "No. This is also his job, and even so, for Easley to be actually deceived by this little act, he's too used to things going smoothly, his coping ability is too poor in the face of emergencies, this will be a lesson for him."

Just as he was about to take a step, he suddenly felt something wasn't right. Looking down, he discovered a long, clean slash mark along the floor.

He then looked inside this floor of the tower. Several straight slash marks intersected with the large white bed as its center. It ran along the ground from the bed all the way to the walls...

The sturdy rocks that made up this tower were currently, ever so slowly, sliding apart along the cracks.

Roland also noticed this dilemma. His face became quite pale, remembering something, "I remember, there's still a legend, the Hundred Billion Stars can unleash the full potential of the sword holder..."

Those who used the sword in the past were all human or elven maidens. Even the greatest powers within their bodies had limits, but Yi Longlong was a ... dragon.

In other words, under the twofold effect of the Hundred Billion Stars and the dragon, similar to the shackles that had chained the youth, this sturdy stone tower had been sliced apart like tofu.

Chapter 22: A team a dragon would not be happy about

Before all of this, the Hundred Billion Stars had never been held by a dragon. The dragon race had always relied on their massive bodies. They themselves were already weapons second to none; any other tools would only be the icing on the cake. And so, no one knew what would happen the moment when the fabled effects of the Hundred Billion Stars within a dragon's hands transform their full power into the blade's sharpness.

But now, Eric and Roland knew.

-Roland had previously tested the sturdiness of the stone tower. He used his sharpest blade and pierced in with all his might but couldn't even leave a scar bigger than a grain of sand on the tower walls.

In actuality, this tower had already been cleanly sliced by the extra force from the blade when Yi Longlong was cutting apart the shackles. Although it was sliced apart, it was only due to the blade being sharp beyond their wildest imaginations that it maintained its original shape, perfect and without a scratch as before. However, after Roland and Eric's round of crossing blades just then, the slight tremors had shattered the balance of the tower's coherence, causing it to collapse.

This, is the might of a dragon.

Eric and Roland exchanged a quick look and saw the surprise and fear in each other's eyes, but now is not the time to exclaim. The next second, both of them remembered the five attendants and the priest that were knocked out by Roland and dumped at the bottom floor of the tower. Should this tower collapse, they will also be buried along.

"I'll leave this to you." After saying this to Roland, Eric had already retracted his raised leg from the window sill. He tightly held Yi Longlong in his arms and said to her, "Endure with this for a bit."

Before Yi Longlong realized what was happening, her body suddenly changed

from stationary to moving. Good thing Eric was holding her very carefully. It was slightly uncomfortable. After the small daze, a person and a dragon then arrived at the bottom of the tower.

As for Roland who was left at the top of the tower, he turned his helpless gaze at the seemingly clueless black haired Adonis who was still safely sitting on the bed. “Lin Qi, huh?” He pronounced the name given by Yi Longlong awkwardly, “Bet you wouldn’t understand even if I say it...for survival’s sake, leave with me.”

When the purple haired rogue finished speaking in a fashion similar to muttering to himself, he grabbed Lin Qi with a swoop, and even while carrying a person, his figure still passed through the windows lightly as before, directly jumping down from a place near the top of the tower.

He lithely sprung a few steps along the body of the tower and alighted on the ground with the lightness of a cat. He raised his head to look up and saw right then and there, humanoid objects being thrown one after another from a lower floor’s window.

The humanoid objects fell without missing their marks onto the tree crowns distanced ten or so meters from the tower.

Eric was in the tower carrying Yi Longlong with one arm. After he picked up the people fainted on the ground with his foot, the other hand tossed them outside. Luckily when Roland descended the floors for the final time, he had put the five attendants and the priest in one place, saving Eric the troubles of having to search.

Pick one up, toss one out. This chain of movements was smoothly connected. When the six men were tossed out like stars aligned together, Eric also followed and jumped out the window, landing on the ground without breaking a sweat.

And all of this was seen right when Roland lifted his head.

Although the explanation of the process is loaded with trivial details, for someone who also possessed a terrifying strength, it wasn’t an overly difficult thing to bring others and escape from the tower in an instant.

“Run.” Eric gave Roland a tug then dragged Lin Qi along. Like an arrow leaving its bow, his body shot towards a place far away from the tower.

Previously when he landed on the ground, the cracks on the tower were getting bigger. All of a sudden, he felt a surge of mysterious energy dispersing continuously from the bottom of the tower, which was also the place where the priest had mentioned before held a powerful, dark and evil air.

That energy was originally quietly sealed away, but Yi Longlong sliced the tower apart and seemed to have opened up Pandora's box...

Although Eric's speed can be considered very fast, it is still not as fast as that energy surge. Roland was directly facing the tower. He only saw the colorful chaos flooding out from the bottom of the tower, spreading out everywhere at the speed of light. It swept over Roland in an instant, then caught up with Eric who had only managed to run out a few steps.

Within that moment, the blooming lights exploded, creating quite a big disturbance in the forest. It had even startled Easley and the others who had been tricked into a wild goose chase. At the same time, Easley also realized he had been had.

Later when they returned, in place of where the tower was originally erected, only a pile of rubble remained. They searched everywhere and found several attendants and the priest spread out ten or so meters away from the rubble, but no matter what, they could not find the shadows of Roland, Eric, the Adonis from the tower nor Yi Longlong.

“What the heck is this place!”

The small white claws clutched onto the hems of a black robe. Yi Longlong vented and screamed at the Adonis from the tower. The latter also copied her tone, repeating everything she said one more time. “What the heck is this place!” However, the tone lacked some fluctuation, making it sound quite strange.

After hearing this strange manual echo, Yi Longlong dropped her head dispiritedly. “So screwed, Eric's not here.”

Just then, when they were smothered by that strange screen of light, there was a surge of energy powerful beyond compare. It forcefully separated her

from Eric, and in her panic her claws tightly grabbed onto the bit of cloth she could reach, and following that she promptly fainted. When she came to, she saw the thing she had grabbed onto was Lin Qi's black magician robe, and that Eric was missing without a trace.

At this point of time, the two of them were lying down in a forest. This sea of trees was far too vast, and Yi Longlong could not even figure out which part she was located in.

What made her even more uneasy was that Eric was not currently by her side, and the guy with her seemed to require even more looking after than her.

"Stop shouting you two, keep shouting and it just might bring in the wild beasts." The purple haired rogue stroked his forehead as he slowly made his way out of the thickets.

Yi Longlong immediately hid behind Lin Qi the moment she saw Roland. Her claws forcibly clutched onto the hems of the magician robe. This was the factor that unsettled her the most. The one that came along with them to this place was actually the worker from the profession she had discriminated all along.

Roland stroked his slightly aching forehead and gave the results from his investigation of the surroundings. "The dirt quality and environment is different from where we had been before. It's positive that we are at least in another piece of forest within the sea of trees. If I didn't get it wrong, that strange light should be a defensive magic, and also an extremely difficult and rare spatial magic at that, sending intruders to other places."

"I've looked everywhere and didn't see your blond companion. It's possible he was rather unlucky and got sent to another place."

Yi Longlong instantly felt sympathy from the pits of her stomach: If Eric was dumped into the expansive sea of forest without meeting any other people, he would definitely die lost.

Chapter 23: The silencing forest

After confirming there were only them two people and a dragon, Yi Longlong let out an old person's sigh with her small tender voice. "Ay, why did I get in a bind together with this fellow?" She really missed Eric.

Roland shot a glance at her and spoke with a blank face, "Well sorry I'm such a detestable rogue."

Regardless of how unwilling she was, Yi Longlong still had to temporarily stay with Roland. Although the purple haired rogue in front of her eyes may be up to no good, he was still slightly more reliable than Lin Qi.

Yi Longlong wasn't too worried about Eric's safety. With his swordsmanship, even if he arrived at any part of the forest, he would still be able to survive. It's just that he had no way of finding the right paths.

When Roland was investigating the area, he had collected some dead wood along the way. He piled them together and prepared to start a fire. Compared to the completely uninjured Yi Longlong and Lin Qi, he was more unlucky. He had been transported right above a puddle of water, and not only did he get his clothes wet, he also accidentally bumped his forehead on the stones beneath the puddle.

Fortunately he did not lose the equipment on his body. He retrieved a flint from his water resistant pouch and ignited the dead wood with a light scrape. Roland lowered his distant purple eyes, pondering over what actions he should take for the next step.

Although he was well informed, in the end he's still not quite knowledgeable in regards to magic. What's more, for the spatial magic renowned for being extremely rare on this continent that was deployed within the tower, not to mention him, even ordinary magicians would not have much of an understanding towards it.

As a result, he had no way of determining their location, how far they were from the stone tower and which part of the sea of trees they were currently in.

This sea of trees was as vast as an ocean, and within the sea of trees, not every place was as safe and smooth as the route he, Easley and the others have taken. There were also exceedingly mysterious and risky places within the sea of trees. All he worried about right now was that he had happened to enter one of the dangerous territories.

While Roland was pondering, the fire blazed up very rapidly. Upon seeing this, Roland stopped pondering for the moment and decided to strip his clothes off to dry. When he lifted the skin tight top he wore at the bottom-most layer of his clothes, he heard a tender childish voice give a cry. Turning his head around, he saw a small white dragon bashfully turned around, the small paws covering her eyes out of courtesy.

“Oi...” In the face of this type of situation, Roland felt really helpless. With Yi Longlong like this, it made him feel as if he was a sex-crazed exhibitionist. “You’re a dragon, what’s a dragon doing being concerned over whether a human’s wearing clothes or not?”

Yi Longlong gave a tiny snort. “You also need to know, I’m a female dragon.”

He honestly did not want to see Yi Longlong making the actions that implied he was a sex addict. In the end, Roland compromised. Using his clothes to create a screen by the fire, it blocked between him and Yi Longlong.

When he was drying his clothes, Roland mentioned Eric. “Wonder how that guy called Alvin’s doing, hopefully he wasn’t sent to a rather dangerous place in the sea of trees.”

Yi Longlong did not feel a bit of worry. “It’s nothing, let’s worry about ourselves instead. Er...Alvin is guaranteed to have no problems.”

She was now already no longer as clueless as when she first met Eric. After comparisons and knowing the strength of the blond youth with an unkempt appearance, to be able to wander lost within the sea of trees without harm for a year, she reckoned that Eric had already unknowingly stepped through whatever dangerous places there were.

The clothes dried very quickly. Roland put them back on piece by piece. He retrieved a black colored bowl and a same colored spoon from his pouch and placed the bowl flat on the ground with the spoon inside.

Yi Longlong questioned with amazement, “About to eat? You have food on you?”

Roland rolled his eyes. “How can that be? This is the one magic that I can do, guiding magic.”

He slowly recited an incantation. Strange and exquisite lines began to shine from the bowl and spoon, but from Yi Longlong’s perspective, it seemed more like a complicated interlaced electrical circuit. However, in the next instant, the electrical circuit extinguished at once, just like a power outage.

After staring at the bowl and spoon for some time, Roland revealed a bitter smile. “The one-time guiding magic was originally going to be wasted, but now there seems to be two matters. Do you want to hear the good or bad news first?”

Yi Longlong shrugged her tiny shoulders. “Any, let’s first hear the good news.”

Because shrugging shoulders was such a human act, Roland stared at Yi Longlong again for a while before opening his mouth to speak. “The good news is, there are no powerful ferocious wild beasts around this piece of forest, our safety is momentarily ensured.”

“Then the bad news?”

“Bad news is, I originally wanted to waste expensive ingredients and use a type of guiding magic to find the way back, but this forest’s a silencing forest. In other words, all magic cannot be used here. Starting from tomorrow, we’ll have to rely on our own abilities and slowly find the path.”

For Yi Longlong, this was not really any bad news. Before she met Eric, she had lived independently within the forest for a very long period, and when travelling with Eric, all she saw everyday were trees. She had already been accustomed to being in the forest. As long as they didn’t bump into ferocious wild beasts and enemies that were deadly enough, then what’s there to be concerned about if they were to circle a few more times in the forest?

They realized that it was nighttime. Soon enough, the moonlight pierced through the gaps between the leaves, casting across the silent forest. The silver moonlight thin as sheer seemed to place a layer of hazy veil on the surrounding

objects. Even though it was a pitch-black forest, it did not appear frightening at all, only letting people feel a peaceful tranquility.

Today there was no way to brush her teeth like before. Yi Longlong still rinsed her mouth under Roland's shocked gaze, then politely bid good night and ran to Lin Qi's side, planning to sleep while clutching his robe.

Before she fell asleep, Yi Longlong suddenly thought of something. She opened her eyes and asked Roland, "Hey, when we've fallen asleep, you won't abandon a weak little animal and an innocent Adonis in the middle of a silent forest and run off by yourself, right?"

Roland blankly looked at the weak little animal that had devastated a tower, and took quite a while before he opened his mouth. "How's that possible? Even if I were to abandon you, I would first bring you out of the forest then abandon you at the traders." Even if he were to abandon himself, he would not abandon the sole surviving dragon of this world.

Chapter 24: Night watch

The night was very quiet. Sitting beside the blistering bonfire, Roland who was on night watch unconsciously stared at Yi Longlong and Lin Qi, his thoughts occupied with other matters.

It was originally an extremely smooth journey. He accepted two jobs, observing and testing Easley along the way. It was supposed to return with success, but instead a very tiny mishap happened.

Dragon.

He had never expected to actually encounter the single descendant of dragons here and in this way.

The creatures known as dragons were an existence that can absolutely make people tremble. Even for the Poem of Cerulean wielding Eric who was eventually hailed as “The Sky Piercing Radiance”, it was only due to his strength that won the dragon’s acknowledgement, and not through prevailing in a fight. This acknowledgement was like a teacher’s praise towards an excelling student, or the same as a person with extremely high achievements under their belt acknowledging the younger generation within the kingdom.

The unpredictable deaths of the dragon race gave rise to an invisible panic among the human world. Regardless of whether they were a single person or a crowd, to possess a brutal strength that could even kill dragons, they all posed a terrifying threat no matter where they were. But as if they had become accidentally famous, they did not create any disturbances to the human world and only silently killed the dragons.

The great nations on the continent had previously sent people to search for the mysterious “Dragon slayer”, desiring to rope them into worldly affairs. However, they unsurprisingly came empty handed. The dragon slayer was like an assassin in the dark, stealthily snatching away dragons’ lives again and again, his blade eventually extending even towards the pseudo-dragons that shared some traits with dragons.

Among those currently observing this matter, their attitudes towards the

dragon slayer were split into two factions. One party believed they should try to exterminate this dangerous existence. This type of person can affect the continent's affairs and even devastate nations. Leaving them here would amount to leaving a threat that can explode at any time. The other party believed that with the dragons dead anyway, since the dragon slayer didn't seem to develop any malice towards humans, if it was possible, they could rope them into their own influence, just what a great force it can be.

However, no one has seen the real identity of the dragon slayer. A dragon knight had previously witnessed from afar the dragon he had contracted being killed, but he did not clearly see the other party's appearance and only vaguely knew that it was a black colored human shape, whether it was human or not it could not even be ascertained. After all, on this continent, things that possessed a human shape were not limited to humans.

...Black color.

Roland subconsciously glanced at the sleeping youth laid next to the bonfire. The youth's pitch black hair and clothes seemed to merge with the night, as if he was the child of night born from a place that never saw the day. The moment people saw him, they would all be attracted by this calm and serene blackness.

The next moment, Roland instantly laughed at himself: How's that possible? It must be because my brain's been injured from today, to come up with this strange connection. Lin Qi only so happened to have long black hair and wear black clothes, how can he be that terrifying dragon slayer? The one he ought to suspect is the master of that tower: having collected numerous valuable legendary artifacts, possessing the art of puppet creation and also the spatial magic that was extremely difficult to master, regardless of which it was, they were all deserving of being recorded down in history, however that visually aged tower was only discovered not too long ago.

But for a terrifying person like that, what were they doing chaining Lin Qi up? And even chained to a bed...

Roland surmised not without some nasty thoughts. He had heard that in some places, people with abnormal talents would usually have an unspeakable eccentricity. Perhaps Lin Qi was a victim of such eccentricity.

His gaze slightly shifted. Roland then saw Yi Longlong curled up next to Lin Qi. The little white dragon had tugged Lin Qi's robe over to use as bedding. The small round grass shoes were removed and placed at the side of the "bed". The leaves were her blanket, her two tiny claws tightly clutching it.

This creature that looked like a dolly pet, from his knowledge, was the one dragon in the world. If he was still suspicious of their identity before, after the event of Hundred Billion Stars slicing the tower, he did not require any more evidence to ascertain it.

Yi Longlong lied down for a while, when out of nowhere she opened her eyes, the beautiful blue eyes meeting right with Roland's line of sight. "Hey, you there," the dragon maiden said with some embarrassment, "Mind turning your head around and don't look at me? I'm not used to being watched while falling asleep."

Lin Qi was actually soundly asleep. It was as if he died the moment he shut his eyes, falling asleep without a care in the world.

The purple haired rogue spoke with an unchanging voice, "Excuse me, please call me Roland or rogue, I'm not 'you there'."

"Alright, Roland, do you have the habit of watching ladies fall asleep?"

Roland could not restrain his face from darkening. He thought for a moment, then at last unwillingly turned his body around. "Have to say, as a dragon, you having such a strange oddity can really rustle up people's anger. Besides, won't you attack me while I turn around?"

"That's something a rogue would do!"

"Don't look down on rogues!"

After the short quarrel, the silent forest under the veil of night recovered its peace once again. Yi Longlong lied beneath the leaves, her tiny body fidgeting all over. Still unable to sleep, she stealthily lifted the leaves she used as a blanket then furtively glanced to see if Roland grew an eye on his back or whatever. After making sure the other party was not peeping, she finally determined that the reason she was unable to fall asleep was due to herself.

After flipping around she sat up. Yi Longlong hugged onto the leaf, put on her

shoes and pattered over to Roland. She reached out a claw and carefully jabbed him. “Oi, let’s chat for a bit.” She could not sleep.

Roland looked down at her and gave a nefarious sneer. “Do you need me to tell you bed time stories? Weak little animal?”

Yi Longlong groaned and lowered her head, weakly saying, “Even if you told it I would still be unable to sleep. I’m used to my bed. Without the silver blue grass bedding, it’s very difficult to get used to it.” Even if she was on the road with Eric, every night, Eric would still lay out the soft grassy bedding for her, letting her fall asleep amid the light fragrance. With the environment changed all at once, it was a bit hard for her to adapt to it.

Roland spoke with a stony expression, “What a pity, I don’t have the space to find the silver blue grass to make your bed.”

Yi Longlong shook her head. “That’s not what I meant, I’m saying... hah, never mind, since I can’t fall asleep, I’ll go on night watch and you take a rest. We’re still depending on you to find the way tomorrow.”

Roland threw a skeptical glance at her. “You? Can you even night watch?” Truthfully, Roland had already known that due to the special attribute of the silencing forest, there normally would not have any excessively ferocious beasts or monsters around here, but there’s nothing wrong with being a bit more cautious.

“No problem. Should a dangerous fellow come, I’ll let out a high pitched scream to wake you up.”

“With this coming from the mouth of a dragon, it’s really asking for people to be disillusioned.” After weakly saying this, he did not hold back on the dragon’s hospitality. He flipped down and lied on the ground, and it wasn’t long before his breathing settled. For people like him who were used to surviving in the wilderness, they could fall asleep in any type of dangerous environment in order for a speedy recuperation.

Carrying the leaf as a blanket, Yi Longlong looked with ennui at the bonfire, and after for who knows how long, she saw a black shadow standing up on the opposite side. It gave her a fright, but looking more clearly she discovered it was Lin Qi and then let out a sigh of relief. Afraid of waking up Roland, she quietly

asked, “You can’t sleep as well?”

Lin Qi was expressionless. His pupils were dim and enigmatic, compared to during the open day, it had an added sense of concealed mystery.

On the other side.

Eric freely swung his sword. His seemingly ordinary blade sliced apart a monster bigger than a person with an unparalleled swiftness and ferocity. Like a sky piercing radiance, it left an elegant trail in the dark. He withdrew his sword then sent another pouncing beast flying with a dexterous flick.

It was already night time. All sorts of monsters were still endlessly swamping in, but compared to them, the word “monster” seemed to suit the man at the center of the slaughter more. Mountains of corpses were piled on the ground everywhere; the blood tainted the soil into a luster that was brighter than sunset, yet not a single drop of blood fell onto the sword wielder’s messy head of resplendent blond hair, still retaining its radiance and splendor.

Eric casually swung his sword while glancing left and right with angst. “Where the blazes should I go, wonder how that little fella’s faring, will she be unable to sleep without a familiar bed.”

Chapter 25: Redcaps

The bonfire gradually died as the firewood was all consumed. Specks of faint red glows remained within the cinders. Yi Longlong looked at Lin Qi with curiosity and some nervousness, unable to figure out what he was doing.

Lin Qi's fine and beautiful face did not show any anger. He did not respond to Yi Longlong's question, and even seemed to be unaware of the existence of the people around him. His pitch black pupils were as though it was bewitched by something, carrying a demonic energy. His gaze was cast far, far away to a void that was impossible for people to trespass; something was calling to him.

And after an unknown period of time, Lin Qi finally moved. He raised his foot and took a step, a snowy white bare foot stretched out from the black robes, but in the next second, his face planted on the ground.

Yi Longlong widened her eyes in bewilderment, seeing two small glowing things hopping to and fro beside Lin Qi's feet. Those things were very much like the little people within stories. They were dressed in green leaves, revealing long and slender limbs. Their whole body emitted a faint glow and on their heads they wore a huge hat that looked the same as a mushroom cap. The caps were bright red with several white spots. These caps also gave off a gentle white glow, making it look like a mushroom shaped light bulb at first glance.

These two little cap wearing people were pulling a grass string which they had used to trip Lin Qi when they were lurking on the ground. Seeing Lin Qi topple down, the little people giggled and guffawed, rolling on the floor laughing while holding onto their caps.

At this moment, Lin Qi slowly got back up. He touched his elbow hurt from the fall with confusion, and although his expression was muddled as always, his pupils recovered its lucidity; the air of demonic energy from before had vanished.

Yi Longlong was quite startled, not understanding what had occurred. A cool voice transmitted from behind her. "Looking at Lin Qi just then, he was probably being summoned by something, or perhaps the person who chained him had left some mystic arts on him that we don't know of... luckily, it was interrupted by

those two little guys.”

She turned around and saw Roland who had woken up at some point of time sitting up with his legs crossed. In a low voice he explained, “The silencing forest’s environment is not quite the same as other places so it’s possible to come across some rarely seen creatures here. The things that tripped over Lin Qi are called redcaps, they’re tiny sprites that love playing practical jokes. They have a naughty and mischievous nature and usually don’t have bad intentions. It’s just that they like playing tricks on others.”

Watching the two redcaps that resembled mushrooms, Yi Longlong’s little claws were itching a bit. She really wanted to catch one to take a closer look, but was also worried of scaring away or wrecking the tender little people.

Noticing her strange look, Roland talked her down from it, “Don’t try to catch them. Being able to survive up till now, they possess their own defense mechanisms. Once they’re caught, they will outright disappear like a wisp of uncatchable air, but they will then very quickly appear in some other place and proceed to wreak vengeance against your actions, causing you nightmares, make your food go off, or even whisk away your good luck, causing you to be out of luck for a very long time.”

Yi Longlong looked back and drifted a glance at Roland. “You trying to scare a dragon?”

Roland had a face of serious business. “No, I’m advising a dragon.” Although she still looked down on the rogue profession, Yi Longlong still cautiously listened to the advice of the experienced person. Worried Lin Qi will provoke the redcaps, she rushed over and grabbed the white flawless hands with her tiny white claws, placing them onto his knees that were covered by the robe. “Be good and don’t move, ‘kay.”

The Adonis from the tower obediently nodded and truly sat on the ground in a behaved manner, the two hands motionlessly covering his knees.

The two little redcap sprites had their laughs, then went on to pull on Lin Qi’s long black hair while giggling away. Due to Yi Longlong’s previous exchange, Lin Qi actually remained still without protest, letting the tiny little sprites turn his hair into a total mess. Seeing this situation, Roland felt he was truly being too

stupid from before to even relate Lin Qi to the dragon slayer.

The redcaps played for a while, the two hand in hand, caps leaned together and were preparing to hop away. Yi Longlong became alarmed, but she couldn't reach out a claw to catch them, and so turned around and gave Roland an imploring look. "Is there no way of making them stay?"

Her beautiful blue eyes were crystal clear, carrying a naivety that did not belong to a grown up. It was displayed with even greater purity in the dark. Meeting up to this gaze, Roland was taken back. In the next second, he immediately reproached his conscience for actually being slightly moved. He spoke with a darkened face, "You think we have the time? Don't forget, our current circumstances aren't really favorable. Even if we traversed through the silencing forest, we still don't know how long it'll take to get out of the sea of trees. We might come across ferocious monsters, or perhaps reach a food or water shortage, and yet you're still thinking of playing around, why not take a good think about these problems of reality."

Out of Roland's expectations, after the scolding Yi Longlong did not become ashamed or furious. She tilted her head and thought for a moment, then earnestly tugged on Roland's sleeve, a childish voice slowly saying, "I don't agree with your view points, those dangers you spoke of do exist, but just because the circumstances are unfavorable, do we have to pull a long face?"

This was a question she had already thought through in her previous life. Now she can use it to rebut Roland smoothly without a hitch, "Do we have to pass our days tearfully just because we're fated to die? Do we have to close our eyes, just because we cannot see the light?" Speaking of unfortunate circumstances, no one was more unfortunate than her because after meeting the palette squad, she realized the problems she will be facing in the future, just when will that dragon killing monstrosity come knocking on the door. However, instead of worrying about a matter far off into the future, why not first enjoy the most out of each day.

A childish voice so soft that it could scoop out water resonated from the small tender body, the rhetoric carrying a penetrating insight that was beyond an adult. "Mister rogue, it's because circumstances are difficult that we should seize onto anything happy..."

With a morose face, Roland made a time-out gesture, interrupting Yi Longlong from continuing. "Fine, you just want the redcaps right? You want how many I'll give you how many, don't go preaching on me, my head hurts just from listening to this."

These were all probably taught to this little dragon by that swordsman called Alvin, right? Although it was an admirable outlook on life, it was not suitable for him.

Seeing Roland was willing to help, Yi Longlong cheerfully shut up. She did not hold out hope that a few words could persuade a grown man with independent thoughts, and was also not interested in becoming someone's spiritual guru. She spoke so much before, all with the end goal of just persuading Roland to help her lure those little redcaps over.

Chapter 26: Party deep in the night

In order to prevent Yi Longlong from trying to sway him again with those words, Roland reached a hand into his pouch and searched while explaining, “These redcap creatures enjoy moonlight and detest sunlight, as well as eye blinding rays of light. If you light a fire, those little guys will immediately run off.

“It’s actually not difficult to lure them in. There are two methods: first is with top quality honey, but we don’t have this on our hands. Furthermore the honey may also attract various types of poisonous wasps and ants, and because of that, this method is usually recommended to those that truly have no artistic talents. As long as you know a bit of music, you can try the second method.” He brought out a harmonica from the pouch. Roland held the harmonica next to his lips and began to play after he uttered a final explanation, “Redcaps also enjoy beautiful music.”

He first haltingly played and tested a few notes, warming up for a while because he had lost his touch from not practicing for a long time. After some time, he drooped his purple eyes halfway down. A mirthful melody sprung forth from the harmonica. The pleasant sounds were like a translucent flow of water, lingering out into the air.

And joining the lively musical notes, Yi Longlong saw with amazement, were lots of glowing, mushroom-shaped redcaps appearing in succession from the pitch black forest. There was a total of approximately fifty to sixty of them. The bodies of the little sprites appeared even more delicate beneath the gigantic mushroom cap-like hats. They came from all directions following the sounds of the harmonica. Some came cart-wheeling in, some were skipping along the leaves, and some were slowly walking along the ground, displaying their separate personalities.

Under the big red caps, the little sprites’ bodies emitted a faint glow. They gradually came to the sides of two men and a dragon. Suddenly seeing so many mushroom-brand light bulbs, Yi Longlong was instead slightly scared. She initially just wanted Roland to help her detain those two redcaps that were about to leave, but he had unexpectedly brought in so many at once.

After a while, Yi Longlong became relieved after discovering the redcaps were not malicious. These tender little people surrounded in a circle, clapping along to the rhythm of the harmonica and deftly dancing on the ground. When the melody suddenly leaped, the little sprites also held each other and threw their partners into the sky.

Beneath the cap was a tiny head that was proportional to the body, with either long or short verdant hair growing from the head. They seemed to be very unwilling to expose their green hair; once the hats fell down, a hand would clasp over the hair while the other hand speedily picked up the hat.

Yi Longlong could even hear these little sprites singing along to the music in lyrics she could not follow. Those fine wispy voices put her under the illusion of countless flowers bursting into bloom.

The little sprites sang and danced exuberantly. Seeing their carefree faces, Yi Longlong was envious and curious. Wanting to know what they were happy about, she listened for a while longer. She felt she should be able to imitate their voices. The vocal cords of dragons are very complicated, and just as Eric had said, it encompassed an extremely wide range, having the ability to easily produce sounds that humans had no way of creating.

Another way of saying it is, dragons can speak in all tongues.

Yi Longlong did not hope for being able to speak in all tongues, but seeing these happy redcaps, she just felt she was being excluded from their circle, which made her feel slightly dissatisfied.

In order to avoid Roland from discovering her tiny actions, Yi Longlong distanced a few steps away from him. After attempting a few times, she gradually grasped the knack of the sounds. Although she still couldn't understand what they were singing, she could still exactly replicate the voices.

After a final silent confirmation that her voice was flawless, Yi Longlong opened her mouth ever so slightly, carefully controlling the vibrations of the vocal cord. The moment she sang out the little sprites' song, the scene in front of her eyes instantly transformed.

She was still inside the silencing forest, Lin Qi and Roland who was beside her also did not move, but what she saw in front of her eyes was a miraculous

fantasy. What was initially moonlight as pale as muslin, momentarily became a rich milky gentleness. The dreary tree branches and leaves presently sparkled. Flowers that seemed to be made of moonlight bloomed, and countless glowing particles floated in the dark, flying and dancing about like fireflies. The sprite's movements that had looked meaningless were now understood clearly by Yi Longlong. They were catching these light particles and hurling them at each other. Whenever anyone was hit by it, a bunch of little sprites will then fling the smacked friend towards the sky.

And at this point of time, Yi Longlong could finally see the tiny faces beneath the caps. They greatly resembled humans and each one was unique. Some of their eyes were slightly larger, some had round noses and some had darker skin. They laughed out loud, faces brimming with a joyous expression.

The resonating songs burrowed those tiny plinking laughs into the depths of her heart. Under the same night sky and with the same songs, the language barriers were hardly worth noticing. Yi Longlong lowly sang while entranced into clapping her paws.

An especially pretty redcap suddenly ran towards Yi Longlong. When he got close, he nimbly jumped up and a pair of dragonfly-like wings that also glowed was spread out from his back, flying to the topmost part of Yi Longlong's head.

Yi Longlong looked at him with curiosity, not knowing what he was planning to do.

The pretty little sprite took off his ginormous red cap out of his own volition, inched close to Yi Longlong's face and gave a light peck.

Yi Longlong uttered a yelp and subconsciously raised her paws to cover her face, but by the time she did it the little sprite had already finished the kiss. He cackled and put on his cap again, speedily flying back to the place where the rest of the redcaps were gathered.

Within the vast sea of trees, in a tiny patch of the silencing forest, this party that belonged only to the night went on for a very long time and continued till daybreak. Feeling the intense rays of light, the redcaps chittered while squatting on the ground. They held the brims of the caps with both hands and pulled towards the ground until it enveloped their entire body. Following that, the

redcaps crowded on the ground disappeared within the gradual brightening of rays from the rising sun.

With the redcaps gone, the glistening trees and moonlight flowers over the treetops were all gone without a trace, but a lively atmosphere stilled seemed to linger in the air. Yi Longlong's two paws covered her face – this was a defensive measure in case another little sprite came to kiss her-she felt as if she had a dream, a beautiful and dazzling dream in a moonlit night.

She subconsciously turned her head towards Roland. Yi Longlong was met with a jealous gaze from the purple haired rogue. "Do you know what you've come across? Legends have it, with the 'Redcap's Blessing', from today onwards for a very long duration, as long as you don't go provoking beasts and monsters, they will not actively attack you."

The redcap's blessing is only given to intelligent living creatures less than three years old. When they are truly favored by the redcap, it will remove its hat and kiss out of its own accord.

He had only seen this type of thing within books. He had previously thought it was a baseless legend, but to his surprise, today he witnessed some person...no, some dragon receive this blessing.

How good would it be if this kiss was planted on his face? Roland thought with jealousy. With this, he can traverse the forest with no problems, and even venture out to more dangerous places.

The rogue suddenly could not help but feel that being a twenty-seven year old himself, this age seemed rather a bit old.

Chapter 27: Dragon bullying

The rays of morning light gradually brightened. The redcaps were gone without a trace and only some ashes remained from last night's bonfire. Roland dug a hole in the ground with the dagger and carefully buried the ashes in it. Although there was no need to hide the tracks in this type of isolated place, leaving behind any traces would make Roland feel uncomfortable all over as a result of his profession.

After last night, in contrast to Yi Longlong's cheerful look, Roland had a completely cold demeanor. After burying the ashes, he then used the dagger again to carve out a pair of rugged wooden clogs to give to the bare-footed Lin Qi to wear.

When Lin Qi was brought out from the tower by him, his feet didn't have shoes on. When he had taken a hurried glance inside the tower, he didn't find shoes that he could give him to wear. Roland then spitefully conjectured, has Lin Qi never left the bed before?

Although Lin Qi was fortunate enough to have avoided stepping on pointy objects up till now, it didn't mean it will also be like this in the future. Roland wasn't doing this out of kindness but instead out of consideration for his own interest. If Lin Qi injured his feet, it will hinder their journey.

Not long after preparations, two people and a dragon then set off just like that. They entered the thick forest; the cascading branches almost blotted out the entire sky. Only a few sparse rays of sunlight scattered through the gaps, casting specks of light onto the floor.

Roland walked in front and Lin Qi at the back with Yi Longlong sprawled over Lin Qi's shoulder. Her little white claws tightly clutched onto Lin Qi's massive robes, her body bobbing along to Lin Qi's footsteps while a pair of blue eyes curiously looked left and right.

Without a say, in regards to wilderness survival skills, Roland was so many more times better at it than Eric. Whether it be finding the way or searching for sources of water, or even scavenging for food, he was exceptionally adept at all

of it. It was as if this forest was his backyard; there was no sense of any unfamiliarity at all.

He could name any plants or animals they saw, and even talk about their growing environments or living habits. He could also extract information from subtle traces and know what sorts of animals were nearby, or determine the water source from the level of moisture in the soil. Not even half a day later, under Roland's lead, they found a small stream and briefly rested there.

Before the break, Roland had already collected quite a number of plants and even a pair of wild pigeons and a few pigeon eggs from a nest.

With a practiced hand, he picked up the slabs of stones by the stream and placed them into a circle. He loosely spread the firewood into it and used a flint to ignite the deadwood that was picked up along the way. When the stones were baked red, Roland took out a small knife and deftly skinned the wild pigeons he had caught on the road. After cleaning them in the stream, he chose a meaty cut and sliced it into one-inch squares of meat that were approximately half a centimeter thick.

He first sprinkled a layer of some nameless leaves onto the slabs. Through the conduction of searing heat from the stones, the leaves dispersed an exceptionally rich aroma. Following that, Roland placed the slices of pigeon meat on top of the leaves, took out a small bottle of spices by his waist and carelessly scattered some powder.

The leftover cuts of meat were sliced by him into narrow strips, spread with salt and wrapped up in leaves, then stuffed into hollow tree branches that were picked up on the road.

The fiery glow lit up the face of the purple haired rogue. He had no expressions, displaying an especially stern sense of estrangement.

Not long afterwards, a layer of glistening oil seeped out from the thin slices of meat. The meat juices trickled onto the stone slabs, producing a sizzling sound. The aroma travelled into the noses of two men and a dragon. The purple haired rogue held a small knife between his fingertips and flipped over the slices of meat in rotation. Soon after, he dexterously selected a morsel, took a moment to carefully study it, and then handed it over to Yi Longlong.

The meat slice was very thin and cooled very quickly. When it reached Yi Longlong's paws, it was already at a suitable temperature to ingest. Yi Longlong held the slice horizontally next to her mouth with her two paws and took a small bite; the deeply aromatic meat juices spilled from the opening – Roland had sliced the meat according to his own customs; they were still a bit big for Yi Longlong.

The next slice of pigeon meat was passed over to Lin Qi. Lin Qi looked at Yi Longlong and also copied her; he took it with both hands, placed it next to his lips and nibbled at it like an ant.

With the meat finished roasting, Roland put out the fire and pushed aside the ashes, then buried the hollow branches stuffed with meat and the pigeon eggs into it, planning to continue utilizing the remaining heat from the ashes.

Yi Longlong ate two slices of meat and already felt almost half-full. After that she waited for the pigeon eggs to be cooked. Yi Longlong reached out and grasped a piece of leaf and carefully wiped her mouth while expressing her gratitude towards Roland as per custom.

“There’s no need to thank me.” Roland pushed aside the ashes and coldly said, “I will look after you on this stretch of the journey, when we exit the sea of trees, you will then resent me.”

Yi Longlong was taken aback. She, who sensed danger, quickly hid behind Lin Qi. “You, what do you want?”

She finally felt threatened by this point of time. Although Roland had been previously discriminated by her based on his profession and had later on helped her attract the redcaps over, this did not imply that Roland was some kind, friendly person.

Within the tower, he was even about to capture her.

Roland didn’t care that Yi Longlong was hiding behind Lin Qi. He estimated the cooking time, pushed aside the ashes and salvaged the remaining pigeon meat and eggs. After waiting for it to slightly cool down, he gave half a share to Yi Longlong and Lin Qi. “You think, I will easily let go of the value of a dragon? But I also know, if I have you by my side, it will bring in quite some troubles. By comparison, trading you in to the Heine family is probably not a bad option at

all."

Yi Longlong jumped in fright after hearing this. She subconsciously turned to flee, but before her stubby little legs managed to run a few steps, she saw Roland, who was initially behind her, was already blocking in front of her at some unknown point of time. Seeing his relaxed posture, it seemed as if he had long been waiting there for her.

Roland sharply stared at her and sluggishly opened his mouth. "Your only second option, is to follow me of your own accord, or be tied up by me and brought away."

He was not worried about Yi Longlong escaping at all, and so told the facts of reality in her face.

With his senses and capabilities, Yi Longlong would have no means of leaving, even within sleeping dreams.

Observing the dark shadow hanging below Roland's purple hair, Yi Longlong was instantly filled with great terror. Now that Eric was not here, she was completely defenseless. Lin Qi also could not be completely counted on...

To be sold off and maybe caged up as a pet, or perhaps used for other purposes.

When she thought of the various possible impending situations, Yi Longlong felt her future was bleak.

The eyes of the little snowy white dragon brimmed with moisture, however this sad pitiful look could not sway the rogue at all. He revealed a wicked smile, drew out his dagger and waved it in front of her, warning her not to attempt an escape, then promptly turned around and returned to his seat.

Yi Longlong resentfully bit on her claws.

Bad guy!

Dragon bullying!

Chapter 28: Poisoned

Escape, she must escape.

In order to avoid turning into a canary or guinea pig, or trained into a Mercedes or Santana, she had to flee from his side no matter what, before Roland left the sea of trees.

Didn't Roland say she had received the redcap's blessing? Even if she ran amok in the forest, the monsters and wild beasts she'll meet will be many times stronger than humans, but at the very least the monsters and beasts will not be thinking of selling her off.

The problem is, how to escape?

After having lunch, Yi Longlong was finally aware of the imminent danger due to Roland showing his hand. They rested for a while by the stream, then Roland announced it was time to continue on the journey. They walked slowly alongside the river. Yi Longlong was sprawled over Lin Qi's shoulder, bobbing along to Lin Qi's footsteps while her two eyes glared at Roland, all worried and anxious.

There was no way to outrun him. There was already sufficient proof from lunchtime. In fact, this matter did not require validation. One can reach the conclusion just by comparing the length of their legs: Yi Longlong glanced at her small stubby legs, then looked at the long powerful legs of the rogue. Dismayed, she gave up on the possibility of a man and dragon race.

As for flying, that was something even more impossible. Although she had a small pair of wings, when these wings flapped, it could at most be used as a fan and fan some wind and so on.

Roland walked in front while hearing only a childish voice from the back moaning and groaning along the whole way. He looked back and was met directly with Yi Longlong's mournful gaze.

Although those eyes looked very pitiful, once he remembered she was a dragon, the rogue could not stop himself from feeling creeped out.

This is probably passing off as the single most miserable dragon within dragon

history.

After walking for an afternoon, when the colors of sunset plunged into the forest, Roland stopped once again to take a rest. Within a single afternoon, besides looking at him with a mournful gaze, Yi Longlong did not make any actions of attempting a revolt. While this took a load off his shoulders, he also felt some disappointment.

There was still another hidden agenda when he had said those threats to Yi Longlong on purpose. That was to test if Yi Longlong was really as weak as she looked, or perhaps to satisfy his teensy bit of unnecessary curiosity, but if he had not ascertained this, his heart would never let it go.

The astonishment from when the Hundred Billion Stars sliced through the tower was still entrenched in his thoughts. He found it difficult to believe that from beginning to the end, Yi Longlong possessed only the bit of power displayed so far. He had even hoped that Yi Longlong would know his intentions and retaliate in anger.

This type of testing came with risks. Of course Roland knew that, but having lived this many years, he was most proficient at fleeing. Even when he was facing Eric, he still had the opportunity to do a full retreat.

But after that afternoon, Roland could finally determine that this infantile dragon really did not pose a threat at all.

Even Roland himself did not know how to interpret the disappointment within his heart: For as long as he could remember, dragons were extremely powerful creatures. In his youth, he had once seen a dragon soaring across the sky from a close distance. Their massive shadow skimmed across the ground; the shock brought forth by the sheer might was something he will never forget in this life. It was a power completely on a different level that utterly surpassed all things.

And yet when he grew up, instead he saw this abnormal dragon. The once mighty existence had fallen into this condition, making Roland feel a type of indescribable loss.

-Roland is not Eric.

Yi Longlong watched the purple haired rogue by the stream cleaning the plums

he had plucked along the way. She confirmed this feeling again in her heart. She did not have much experience in interacting with others in her previous life at the hospital. Although she had seen and understood a lot, there was still a lot of distance to be covered for the real thing.

It's also like this now.

Even though she knew she was a dragon, and the last dragon at that, other people will inevitably maintain a different attitude towards her, but after being away from Eric and together with the malevolent rogue, she experienced this for real.

Yi Longlong heaved another sigh. The little paws patted Lin Qi to place her down. Her gaze accidentally swept past the dagger Roland had carelessly placed on the floor. Roland had previously taken it out to hack away the branches and still hadn't returned it to its sheath.

Yi Lonlong speedily pattered over there. The two paws held the hilt and lifted the dagger. At this moment, hearing the strange clatter Roland whipped his head around and saw her in the act.

Meeting up to the purple eyes that were shining with mockery, Yi Longlong suddenly felt that her thoughtless act was simply stupid. She was not scary or threatening at all with her current appearance. Even when combining the small white dragon with the dagger she lifted that can be called a longsword with respect to her body, it was still not as long as Roland's legs...

Ugh, too stupid.

Just from comparing their heights alone, Yi Longlong's will to fight completely vanished. The sword also weakly dropped. It was already stupid enough when she impulsively picked up the sword the moment she saw it. If she continued to stupidly chop her way there, it would just be asking for humiliation.

Under Roland's watchful gaze, Yi Longlong ashamedly placed down the dagger. The keen edge of the blade scraped her paw, leaving a shallow scar. The wound wasn't deep and blood didn't even flow from it. Yi Longlong did not mind this and licked her little injured paw in a downcast manner, all the while feebly dragging her tail back to her place.

Seeing that Roland had finished washing the pile of plums that now laid glinting on a slab of stone, Yi Longlong resignedly walked to the stream to wash her paws.

Roland deftly picked up the dagger and peeled the bruises on the plums. With a twist of his wrist and a careless throw, two bright red fruits arced along two different trajectories and accurately dropped in front of Lin Qi and Yi Longlong.

Yi Longlong subconsciously caught the plum with her paw. The thin skin split open, revealing the fleshy goodness inside, the juices splattered over one of her paws.

Yi Longlong stuck out her soft little tongue and carefully licked clean the juices off her paw. Just as she was about to bite down, she suddenly saw Roland collapse in agony ahead, his hand still clutching a plum with a bite taken out of it.

Is this plum poisonous?

Yi Longlong panicked when she recalled that she had also sucked some of the juices from just before. Her whole body stiffened and awaited a painful death to descend on her, however after waiting for a good period of time, nothing out of the ordinary seemed to happen at all.

Recalling that Roland had also thrown a plum at Lin Qi, Yi Longlong hurriedly looked around and saw Lin Qi who was beside her had already finished off the plum with great relish. He had an elegant face of naïve ignorance with a shade of satisfaction. He was safe and sound as before.

The scene in front of her eyes was very strange. Only Roland moaned and rolled about on the floor; the other man and dragon squatted down with curiosity and watched him perform.

Lin Qi poked a finger at Yi Longlong's little paw and asked with some confusion, "What is he doing?" He did not comprehend the scene in front of their eyes at all.

Yi Longlong threw out some nonsense. "Don't know, maybe it's a technique for exercising before eating that's exclusive to rogues?"

In her previous life, there was a saying like "Stroll after you dine, live till ninety-nine". Perhaps there were some special requirements for when the rogues ate.

How peculiar.

“You’re the one who does exclusive exercises before eating, your whole family does exclusive exercises before eating!” After squeezing out the words with difficulty between clenched teeth, Roland was so pained he could not speak. He felt as if his whole body was being burned by a scorching fire, the next moment a piercing cold seemed to course through his veins. He felt hot enough to explode, yet in the next moment cold enough to shrivel.

In his grogginess, Roland recalled something that he had almost forgotten: A great power is contained within the blood of dragons. That is something humans have no way of bearing. Just then, Yi Longlong had scratched her paw when she carelessly held the dagger. Although it wasn’t obvious, a small amount of blood remained on the blade and he used the dagger later on to shave the plums. Perhaps that blood had contaminated one of the plums and was unlucky consumed by him.

Because he had confirmed Yi Longlong as weak, he began to belittle her and so did not recall it in time. Even if she had fallen to such a state, she was still a bona fide dragon. The most terrifying blood in this world was flowing throughout her body. Even for less than half a drop of blood, to him, it was a deadly poison.

In his immense pain, it felt as though his life was also being set aflame.

Chapter 29: Reap what you sow

“Despicable.” After doing another round of rogue-exclusive pre-eating exercises, Roland regained his senses for a moment. While deeply gasping with a face full of sweat, he furiously blamed Yi Longlong, “Putting up a front to relax people’s guard, your true aim was to poison others with your blood wasn’t it? Really despicable.”

Yi Longlong stood there aghast. It took a good period of time before she remembered to retort. “Nonsense. How can my blood poison you?” Hearing him say those words, it was exceedingly unjust to the dragon.

“You’re the one who picked the fruit. You’re the one who washed it, and you’re also the one who peeled it with your own dagger. Even who got which fruit was decided by you in the end. Your stupidity and bad luck got yourself poisoned and yet you’re blaming an innocent dragon, aren’t you truly shameless!”

After she finished listing her defense, Yi Longlong’s little mouth spat, displaying her infinite disdain towards the rogue.

Yi Longlong’s refute left the rogue speechless. The word stupid was like a big staggering blow to his head, creating serious trauma to his self-esteem, but he was unwilling to admit it no matter what that he had actually been this negligent. To have unguardedly eaten food contaminated with dragon blood, this is more humiliating than death by choking on food. If this were to spread out, he could no longer mix with the rogue syndicates.

This sort of absurd blunder had never happened before on this continent, first off being that dragons were already mighty powerful and essentially did not have to resort to such a silly device to harm people, and secondly, the dragons he knew of in the past all had skin as thick as walls. Nowhere was it as thin and flabby as the one in front of his eyes, bleeding just from an ordinary dagger?

With skin this thin, don’t come out to endanger people!

The unlucky rogue continued the pre-eating exercises while letting out moans that can make people misunderstand. It was like he was being burned by searing

hot magma, his blood evaporating dry from his whole body, but the moment before he withered, another ice-cold blast would replace the fiery heat, filling his limbs and bones. The hot and cold interchangeably tortured him, and very quickly he could not utter any more needless words.

Yi Longlong carefully observed for a while. After finally confirming Roland had indeed been poisoned, she could not help lifting her paw and take a look at the scar previously left by the dagger. That narrow scar line had almost vanished: Can it be that besides being a giant panda or Siberian tiger, her body also carries the properties of arsenic trioxide?

Lin Qi slowly shuffled his way there, reached out for another cleanly washed plum to eat and while he was there, he admired Roland's writhing from a close distance. After eating, he washed his hands and also copied Roland and rolled two rounds on the floor, then he stood up and picked off some leaves and dust from his hair with quite some disappointment. "Not fun."

After being in agony, Roland almost went mad from anger. What kind of person (dragon) is this, can't you show some normal reactions?

Yi Longlong saw Roland writhing in pain and could not quite bear it. Although she knew this guy was up to no good, she just could not helplessly watch a person die in front of her eyes. She retreated two steps to prevent Roland from suddenly jumping up and strangling her out of frustration. "Hey, is there a way to dispel the poison?" She was talking about the dragon blood's poison.

At this point of time, Roland could not even groan out. He panted while he stuttered, "If...I...knew, then...it... wouldn't be like this." To be precise, dragon blood is actually not a type of poison, but rather a destroying power. The only thing that can cancel power is power, but he was far from that realm.

Is this what is meant by the God Aldin: Evil bites back at those with hearts possessed by evil?

Semiconscious, Roland recalled the words spoken by that inconspicuous priest from the palette squad. He had always brushed off those types of sermons, but for some reason he remembered it at this moment.

Ever since he entered this line of work, he had done quite a lot of grey things, as for something called kindness he had long cast that away. Now, he had

actually made a blunder that even rookies would not make. This is probably a punishment sent by the Gods.

In short, Roland did the pre-eating exercise for a very long time, all till the night descended. The pale radiance of the stars shone down and scattered. His groaning gradually weakened, his whole body drenched in sweat, he then fainted from exhaustion.

After hearing no noises from Roland for a long time, Yi Longlong then dared to close in. She stood next to Roland's head and reached out a paw to check if he was breathing: Although the rogue's breaths were rather weak, it was still persisting.

Yi Longlong let out a sigh of relief: Still good, no one died.

With two paws folded in front of her chest, Yi Longlong gave a single bow to the rogue: "Um, truly sorry about that, because you were going to collect a bounty off me, so I must flee while you can't move."

This is simply a heaven-sent opportunity, if she did not take advantage of this to flee, then she'd truly be retarded.

"Oi, Lin Qi, come help out." She waved Lin Qi over. Yi Longlong had her eyes closed while instructing him to loot the rogue. After stripping the rogue of all his clothes and having Lin Qi drag the naked rogue behind a massive tree within the forest, she then dared to open her eyes. She placed the pieces of clothes ransacked from Roland and the familiar and unfamiliar little gadgets from the pockets together and had Lin Qi carry them.

"Alright, a massive success!" After teaching Lin Qi to use Roland's clothes to create a simple bundle, Yi Longlong clapped her paws happily. She had spent a whole afternoon feeling miserable, and now she recovered her good mood again. "Let's dump the detestable rogue in the scary forest."

She signaled Lin Qi to crouch down. Just before she jumped on, Yi Longlong suddenly remembered something. She took up the dagger that had indirectly saved her in both hands, walked several steps to the edge of the forest and stuck it seriously in the ground.

Although she was angry at Roland, she had no intentions of killing him. When

Roland wakes up, he should be able to survive in the forest by relying on the dagger and his rich knowledge.

But without clothes, it's quite possible Roland wouldn't dare to run around the forest naked. This will at least buy them some additional time to escape.

After reviewing her own ideas and certain that there were no problems with it, Yi Longlong jumped onto Lin Qi's shoulder with her heart at ease. The little paw pointed at the blurry radiance of the moon, reflecting an especially gentle and vivid white: "Time to set off!"

1. 鹤顶红 Hè dǐng hóng-Arsenic trioxide. Well known for its toxicity upon inhalation or skin contact, and also of biomedical interest, with history dating back to Chinese medicine where it is known as 砒霜 (pi-shuang). Currently also used to treat cancer and other conditions.
2. 欧尔丁 Ōu ěr ding –Aldin, a God from the fictional continent. Not quite Odin, which is spelt 奥丁 Ào ding in Chinese.

Chapter 30: Guiding magic

After departing from Roland the survival guidebook, a snow white maiden dragon who was worst off in history and a mysterious mentally stunted youth who was perhaps imprisoned for so long that it led to his brain being addled, both did not have any ideas of how to get out and resorted to walking in one direction, going along with the flow.

Lin Qi carried the bundle on his left shoulder, with Yi Longlong sprawled on his right shoulder. The latter's little snow white claws pointed ahead.

Yi Longlong's tiny body was on top of Lin Qi's shoulder, directing the youth to run forward at a quick pace. The moonlight shone down on their bodies, serene and free. In the night, even the sounds of birds and insects were asleep, leaving only the clacking echoes of the wooden clogs of the Adonis from the tower.

What made Yi Longlong slightly surprised was that although Lin Qi's outer appearance seemed extremely delicate, his strength was actually not bad. He ran for a whole night carrying her, all till the sun rose. When the radiance of the first rays of light shot into the forest he did not pause his steps, and after running for a whole night, his breathing was just as normal as when he had just started.

What good body strength!

Yi Longlong enviously patted Lin Qi's shoulder. "Let's stop here and rest for a while. That guy will probably be unable to catch up to us." Even if Lin Qi's strength is good, it is not inexhaustible; they still have to rest when the time comes for resting.

Lin Qi sweetly nodded his head and crouched to let Yi Longlong off. After that, a person and a dragon heard grumbling sounds coming from each other's stomachs.

Last night, Yi Longlong did not eat many plums due to the sudden event of the poisoning. Although Lin Qi defied death and ate another one, following that he was restrained by Yi Longlong in case he accidentally consumed dragon blood.

And so, after passing a night, they were now hungry.

Yi Longlong's face heated up then waved her paws at once to divert the attention. "Let's first think of ways to find food... right, take a good look at what that guy's brought with him." When they raided before, they didn't have the time to carefully investigate. Right now they had time to spare.

Lin Qi untied the bundle from his shoulders, opened it up and let the things inside tumble onto the floor. Yi Longlong crouched down while picking up pieces to examine carefully.

The things Roland carried were many and very complex. Of those, the lock picking tools were indispensable. There were also various delicately shaped equipment, a flint stone, small knife, tweezers and even things she did not know the name for. Besides that, Yi Longlong also found the bowl and spoon that Roland had attempted to use for guiding magic. Yi Longlong held this thing that looked like dinnerware in front of her eyes. Borrowing the morning lights to carefully examine, she discovered that the bowl and spoon were actually not pure black. They carried very fine silvery patterns on top; they were merely too fine and easily passed over.

She scratched those silver criss-crossing lines with her claw and nothing in particular came off. Yi Longlong grabbed the spoon and chewed on it. Nothing activated. Feeling it was futile, she then put it aside and continued to examine other things.

However, shortly after that, she suddenly felt as if the surroundings had become different. Turning her head around, she saw the mentally stunted Adonis kneeling on the ground, a single arm reaching horizontally towards the air, the palm faced directly down at the bowl and spoon she had casually placed down. At this moment, the silvery patterns upon the bowl and spoon seemed to spring alive, lighting up in vivid colors. These patterns combined and criss-crossed with each other, and not long after, a silver radiance spurt forth from the bowl like a fountain. These silver lights shot straight towards the air, then gradually thinned and narrowed down. Finally, the silver ray that was originally as thick as the mouth of the bowl became as thin as a chopstick. At this time the silver ray was no longer directed vertically towards the sky, but slanted in a direction with the spoon handle as the starting point, pointing distantly towards the depths of the forest, reaching far off into an unknown destination.

After Yi Longlong got over her amazement, she recalled that when Roland had previously taken out this set of tools, he had intended to use magic to get directions but gave up due to being in the silencing forest. Can it be that they have already gone out of that so-called silencing forest?

And what she is seeing right now, is the so-called guiding magic?

In other words, this silver colored light, is pointing towards the correct way to leave the forest?

Awesome!

With some excitement, Yi Longlong gave Lin Qi a hearty pat with her paw. “You can use this? Was it taught to you by the magician from that tower?”

Although Yi Longlong was surprised that Lin Qi can use magic, after some pondering she very quickly felt relief. He was imprisoned in the tower for a long time and lived together with a perverted magician. Even just by the influence from the environment, he should have at least understood some things right?

Without further qualms about this matter, Yi Longlong bustlingly packed up the rogue’s belongings but left the bowl outside. She happily asked Lin Qi, “How is it how is it? Do we just follow the silver colored light and that’s it? How do we handle the bowl?” Dispose it here?

If it can really guide the way, then this seems to be a good item, on another day she can have Eric equip a dozen of these.

Lin Qi lifted his white delicate hands, his expression seemed slightly perplexed as if he had not understood what he had just done. He did not know what the bowl and spoon was, what guiding magic was, he completely did not comprehend it, but seeing these tools, his body naturally responded with the correct actions, as if it was an ability ingrained in his blood.

As for Yi Longlong’s question, he had no way of replying. He could only randomly nod based on his intuition.

“Then let’s go.” Having no time for filling up the stomach after discovering a new thing, Yi Longlong happily hopped onto Lin Qi’s shoulder, her little paws pawing at his shoulder without a bit of lethality. “Go go, we’ll eat later, this is super fun.”

She was actually not in a hurry to go out of this patch of forest, but the new interaction with the toy made the young dragon quite happy, wanting to see whether the light can really guide the way.

Even if they got out of this sea of trees in the end, she will probably be scared, but she will not retreat from it.

Of course, not everyone is like Eric, but everyone is also not necessarily like Roland.

As a maiden dragon that had once been human, she still held faith towards this society.

A person and a dragon followed the path pointed by the silver ray of light, barging through the forest without knowing anything at all. No incidents actually happened within those ten or so days. Perhaps the road they were on was particularly safe, or perhaps that blessing from the redcap's kiss was in effect, but regardless of what it was, it was somehow fortunate. Anyhow, a person and a dragon were lucky that by relying on this thing that seemed totally unreliable, ten days later, they saw smoke billowing out from ahead.

Smoke signified there may possibly be humans.

Yi Longlong decided to first hide herself for safety precautions. She taught Lin Qi to place her inside the bundle on his back. She huddled herself into a small size and traveled forth while bobbing along to Lin Qi's footsteps.

Chapter 31: Specialties of Vanilla Town

Lin Qi slowed down his pace as according to Yi Longlong's words. Every once in a while, Yi Longlong would stick out her small snowy white head from the bundle behind his back, half peering over his shoulder that was cloaked with a black colored robe, cautiously snooping the situation ahead.

The woods gradually became sparse; the tepid winds blew against their faces.

The chopstick-thin silver beam of light did not pale at all within these ten or so days. The splendidorous radiance led them onwards ahead, like a divine finger, steady and eternal.

The buildings ahead were already vaguely in sight. It was midday at this time; the cooking smoke had risen up from here.

But at this time, Yi Longlong had grasped onto Lin Qi's clothes with her paw, signaling him to slow to a halt. She did not comprehend any magic at all, and also did not know how that guiding was activated, but from logical reasoning, since it guided the way, then it was quite possible that there was a set coordinate. This coordinate also had a great possibility of being the small bordering town that Roland and others had set off from.

If there are people from the small town who knew Roland had this kind of skill, but sees that the person returning isn't Roland, what will they think?

Then without a doubt, they will be treated as robbers and get caught – although they did indeed ransack Roland no mistake about that, but it was reasonable self-defense.

In any case, even if no one treated them as criminals, this beam of light must have already lasted for many days. If they were to go out there along with the beam, it will definitely attract a lot of attention.

She is a dragon keeping a low profile.

The tiny body wriggled. Yi Longlong scrambled her way out from the bundle onto Lin Qi's shoulder. The paws stopped him and pulled the brakes. "Stop, let's change directions."

She tugged on Lin Qi and returned once again to the forest, leaving that beam of light, then cautiously took a long turn around, until the darkness closed in. Only then did they move in towards the small town from a different direction.

The small town that Roland and others had set off from could be considered as a security checkpoint on the borders, however this town had a name that had nothing to do with might at all. It was called Vanilla Town, the reason being that several top-grade vanillas were being produced here; they were indispensable ingredients in making perfume.

Besides vanilla, based on the palette squad's chatter and from what Roland had said on the road, Vanilla Town also had two other specialties, first being the Oak Tree Tavern, the second being the priests inside the village's temple.

Temples are religious buildings on this continent. The continent prevalently believes in a god called Aldin. The temple's influence is extremely great and vast, with a branch in every part of the world, sending off multitudes of priests. There are a total of two priests within Vanilla Village's temple. One is that soft-spoken grey haired person who went with the palette squad, the other one, from Roland's words, is the main specialty, the identity being the teacher of that grey haired priest.

Back then when he spoke of the second specialty item the priest, Roland did not say too much and only revealed an indescribable sort of smile. "After seeing him, you'll understand."

The rays of light in the sky became a pale yellow. Lin Qi finally made his way near this small town that was located on the borders but also neighboring with the vast sea of trees. An ancient rampart was erected along the edges of the small town, the scars on the surface of the stone walls was testament to the harsh weathers it had endured, like a hero in their later days, old and glorious.

When Lin Qi neared the small town, he was discovered by the patrolling soldiers nearby. After ten or more days spent living inside the forest, although they did not encounter danger at all along the way, Lin Qi's outer appearance looked extremely shabby. His black robes were full of dirt, battered and withered leaves were strewn across his hair, looking like a miserable wretch that had fallen in distress.

The soldiers did not seem to see Lin Qi as strange and also did not raise any alarms. Although the sea of trees was vast, adventurers loved to come to this place. Several small towns on the side nearby also neighbored the sea of trees. People setting off from this small town, or arriving from another town, this sort of matter was not really unusual.

Seeing that Lin Qi was seemingly dressed up as a magician, and one fallen into bad luck and distress at that, the patrol randomly sent a person, asked for Lin Qi's name, then led him to the lodging inside the town's inn.

Yi Longlong was originally worried about being interrogated by the patrol and made lots of prior preparations. Now it was all useless.

Looks like this so-called border patrol is extremely lax.

Passing through the bordering walls, the atmosphere of the small town behind the ramparts was completely different in contrast to the ancient ramparts etched with battles. Beneath the gentle dusky rays of light, the whole town brimmed with warmth and serenity.

The soldier went on his way. He walked while smilingly greeting the people he passed by, sometimes he even stopped to have a small chat, as if he was familiar with every single person. More so, when he saw an old lady moving something heavy, the soldier went forth to help of his own accord, sending her back home.

Due to the soldier's interactions along the way, what was originally a path that could be considered not long, took a total of half an hour to reach the inn the soldier had spoken of.

The inn and tavern of the small town was combined into one. The first floor was the tavern, lodging for guests was upstairs.

After letting Lin Qi into the inn, the soldier followed inside. "Oak Tree Tavern is the best place for drinks in our town, coming to our Vanilla Town, if you don't do two things, it's the same as never having come here."

Although Lin Qi was silent along the whole way, the soldier did not take it to heart that much and introduced very passionately as always, "Firstly is our town's vanilla. The spices and perfumes popular with nobles are all made from ingredients produced here, there are craftsmen in the town who turn the vanilla

into pressed specimens. You can buy one as souvenir; it's got some unique local flavor to it.

"Besides that, the liquor from Oak Tree Tavern is even more fragrant than the liquor from the Royal City, having come here, you must give it a taste."

Hearing him happily speak, Yi Longlong recalled the specialties of Vanilla Town that Roland spoke of, and out of curiosity she spoke up, "Then what about the priest from the temple? I've heard that the priest from the town is very famous." After ten or more days of interactions, Yi Longlong could already perfectly imitate Lin Qi's voice. She was hidden inside the bundle on Lin Qi's back. When she spoke, Lin Qi would cooperate and move his lips. Although the lip movements may not necessarily match up, not many people would notice this bit.

When the soldier heard Lin Qi speak, he gave a forced smile and sighed. "So you've also heard of this... if you're talking about his lordship, then it's better for you not to see him."

As if it had hit one of the his nerves, the solder immediately shut his mouth, quickly led Lin Qi to the tavern's counter, gave a short explanation to the boss then turned and left.

The tavern's boss saw Lin Qi and promptly bent down to retrieve a wooden card. A key hung below the wooden card. "Our policy here is to pay upfront, and to also leave a deposit to pay for the lodging, may I ask how long you are looking to stay?"

Yi Longlong curled up and pondered. She decided to not stay for too long at first, in case they needed to suddenly leave. "Two days, two rooms." When she spoke, Lin Qi hurriedly lip synched.

The boss was startled. "You also have companions?"

The elegant black haired Adonis had a sincere expression. His lips flapped in a rhythm that did not quite match up with the words. "No, but I like to spend half a night sleeping in one room, the next half sleeping in another, two rooms to sleep in interchangeably, is that not allowed?"

Chapter 32: Take a rest

This additional room was naturally for Yi Longlong, but she did not plan on revealing herself. The tavern's boss who was also the boss of the inn squinted at Lin Qi for a while, secretly judging whether this boy was looking for trouble. After watching for some time, he concluded that this was a magician with a strange hobby and did not continue delving into the matter.

After calculating the payment for two rooms, in addition to the periodic food services provided by the tavern, the tavern boss gave a quote of three silvers. Following that, he watched with amazement as the bundle carried on the back of the strange magician boy shook, and then three silvers seemed to jump out by themselves, over the magician's shoulder, and fell with two clinks onto the middle of Lin Qi's palm that was positioned in front of his chest.

Lin Qi then followed up by placing the silvers on top of the wooden counter.

Naturally, Lin Qi did not understand the concept of payment. This was something Yi Longlong had previously went to great lengths to train, informing him about the situations where he will need to use those metal pieces and have him obediently cooperate.

The boss was stunned again and tried to resist the urge to peek at Lin Qi's back. Once again he told himself that this was a magician's strange quirk, and as a knowledgeable tavern boss, he should not show an overly curious look.

At this point of time, there were only a few guests within the inn. The rays of light were also rather dim. Lin Qi took the two keys from the boss' hand. His wooden clogs stepped onto the hollow staircase, resounding with clarity.

After reaching the second floor, there were finally no people. Lin Qi looked left and right in confusion. He only knew to go this way after the boss pointed at the stairs, but after reaching the top, he did not know what to do.

Through the ten or so days of interaction, when Lin Qi slowed to a halt, Yi Longlong knew that something was up. She sensed that the second floor did not have any people and didn't take too much into consideration. She crawled out from the bundle, patted Lin Qi's shoulder with her little paw and took the

wooden cards tied with the keys. The two wooden cards each had different patterns decorated on the surface, and on the second floor of the inn, several rooms also had similar symbols marked on the doors.

This was to convenience people from other countries or those who were illiterate that had come to rest at the inn. They could distinguish the rooms through the symbols.

The boss gave them adjacent rooms, probably to make it convenient for Lin Qi to switch rooms to sleep in the middle of the night. Yi Longlong made an effort to hold the overly big keys with her little paws, inserted it into the keyhole and twisted.

The wooden door opened a slit. Lin Qi reached out and pushed.

When they entered the room, a light smell of vanilla was delivered to their noses. It was different from the overflowing smell of alcohol from the lower floor. The rooms upstairs were tidily cleaned up; the air was extremely refreshing.

The size of the room wasn't really big, the main furnishing was but a bed. This bed naturally could not compare with the bed from the tower that was used to imprison Lin Qi, but the white colored quilt neatly folded on top was already enough to entice a dragon that could not sleep for a good several days due to the tick of needing familiar bedding.

Yi Longlong jumped down from Lin Qi's shoulder; her body came in contact with the soft quilt. Her whole body began to quiver with bliss. She happily hugged her tail and rolled around several times on the bed, rolling from the head of the bed all the way to the foot, then from the foot all the way back to the head. Just when she was about to go for another round, her eyes suddenly met with a big pair of limpid and muddled eyes.

Lin Qi knelt by the bed and asked out of curiosity, "Are you doing the rogue-exclusive pre-meal exercises?"

Yi Longlong's face darkened, then remembered that when she spoke baloney to the rogue ten or so days ago, the mentally stunted Adonis had actually earnestly taken note and believed it to be true.

Lin Qi was like a clean, snow white sheet of paper, letting her smear it however she wants. Whatever she smears on, he will take note of it.

Truth to be told, from the beginning she had never seriously put him into consideration, however he had actually remembered every single phrase she uttered.

Meeting Lin Qi's earnest eyes that bordered on naivety, Yi Longlong felt some shame. She sat up holding the quilt and seriously explained it to him for the first time, not out of her own considerations, but to only let Lin Qi understand this world.

This world was completely foreign to her and Lin Qi. They were bumbling around, learning and figuring things out. The point of difference was that her mind had twenty additional years of experience and had already formed a stable and systematic thought process, while his was truly a blank sheet, not knowing and understanding anything at all.

Yi Longlong shuffled to the edge of the bed, then held Lin Qi's two hands with her paws – the tiny paws could only hold a single finger, so she resorted to holding only Lin Qi's two index fingers. “Although we know nothing at all, but... from today onwards let's work hard.”

Eric is probably still spinning in circles in some part of the forest. Estimating that it is difficult to place hope on him, she can only rely on herself.

If let's say Lin Qi and Yi Longlong's luck had a full 10 rating, then Roland who was cast behind by them deep within the forest would perhaps have a low luck rating of 0.

Bundles of vines covered the important bits on Roland's body. With a dagger tightly gripped in one hand, he skulked along the road and finally found the black bowl and spoon that currently emitted a guiding silver light.

He was in a worse state than Yi Longlong imagined. Because of the torment from the dragon blood, it made his body grovel for a good few days. In these few days, he had to hide in a concealed place, relying on a small amount of fruits to sustain himself and waited for some recuperation, and also because his body had

no clothes on, he made his way in a state of dread, fearing that he will come across people.

Fortunately, or perhaps unfortunately, he did not meet anyone on the road, and instead met several monsters and beasts. By relying only on a dagger, he barely escaped with his life. It took this much time to reach where Yi Longlong and Lin Qi traveled to on the first night.

His greatest talent was not in gritty swordsmanship. Many skills required the use of those tiny tools confiscated by Yi Longlong. The dagger was in fact the most useless item Yi Longlong could have left him with.

When he saw the bowl and spoon, his face changed. “Who touched my magic?”

What Yi Longlong did not know, was that this equipment that carried guiding magic was custom made for Roland by a magic craftsman, and other than the creator, the theory behind the magic’s activation was only known to Roland himself.

The important point was that, here in reality was still within the boundaries of the silencing forest.

After the past few days, the silver light had already began to pale, and several days later it will vanish, but Roland was not in a hurry to follow the beam. He was only in a daze.

To be able to disregard the two-fold limitations and activate the magic, it would definitely have been a magician at the advisor level. The number of this type of people on the continent did not exceed five, but no matter how much Roland wracked his brain, he could not think just exactly which magic advisor was recently free and had nothing to do, and came to the borders to play.

Outside of this, the blond boy who could be regarded as having a luck rating of negative 100, was still fretting inside a swamp filled with monsters: Go this way? This way? Or this way?

Chapter 33: Rumors

Having rested for a night, Yi Longlong lazily clambered up from the bed. She was limp all over, as if anesthetic had seeped through her bones. Her tiny claws weakly scratched the quilt for a while, then she got up with a struggle, put on her grassy clothes, and then did some stretches. Her paws and feet regained its nimbleness, then with a pitter patter she went next door to find Lin Qi.

The sky hasn't brightened yet, although she really wanted to continue sleeping, there were a lot of important matters to be dealt with, it must be completed as soon as possible.

Lin Qi's room was right next to Yi Longlong's. Yi Longlong opened the door a slit. She stuck out her tiny head through the slit, looked around, and after making certain there was no one, she scampered at high speed, came in front of Lin Qi's door, lifted her paw and lightly knocked at the ... bottom part of the door.

This feeling of being constrained by height, it's really.... too humiliating for a dragon.

The door opened in a flash after just a single knock, then she saw the person she spoke of early beforehand, Lin Qi, had risen from bed and squatted behind the door waiting for her.

How adorable.

Although Lin Qi can be considered a giant to her, but for whatever reason, as she looked at the big and lovely, lucid muddled eyes of the black robed Adonis, Yi Longlong still formed this conception of him. She climbed to Lin Qi's shoulder and gave his dark hair a pat with her paw.

She then jumped down and entered the room. Yi Longlong hinted to Lin Qi to close the door, then discussed with him the things they needed to do today.

She was very clear about the timing.

When the palette squad talked, Yi Longlong had basically listened from one side in silence. She found out that before they met, the other party had already

traveled for a month. In other words, after the tower crumbled, even if Easley didn't go searching for the few missing people within the forest, if he wanted to make a return trip and increased his speed taking into account of everything, it would take at least ten or more days, and not to mention with the loss of the rogue who specialized in scouting and directions, they would surely be hindered quite a bit.

As for Roland whom she had abandoned in the forest, with his own power after being stripped bare, should he decide to catch up with them who had run like mad almost without a break, it's probably not an easy task at all.

With these estimations, they have earned at least five days' time to take a short break in this small town on the border and get ready to set off before Roland and the palette squad returns.

When she thought about this time difference, Yi Longlong felt that all the hardships, being on the road day and night and barely sleeping, was all worth it.

It wasn't that Yi Longlong didn't want to wait for Eric, but if they were to constantly wait here, before Eric comes, every color paint of the palette would have returned by then.

These sorts of little noises came from within the room:

"First you have to clean yourself up, we're going outside, appearances are very important."

"In a while I'll have the tavern boss deliver hot water here, you go have a wash."

"Oh right, do you know how to take off clothes, I'll teach you, first undo the buttons..."

"Hey hey, don't strip in front of me, wait a moment, wait till I've turned around ... no, should first request for water..."

A young mage has come to live in Oak Tree Tavern.

Vanilla Town was not a very big place. The long term residents of the town were familiar with almost every single household. The moment there were news,

it would quickly spread. Right now, the rumors of the town concerned the actions made by the young mage who came yesterday to live at Oak Tree Tavern.

Early today, this magician called for the tavern boss and had him individually invite the town's tailors, carpenters, blacksmiths and medicinal traders to assemble inside his room.

A total of eight people were called over by the tavern boss. Of those, there were three carpenters, four tailors and a blacksmith. Some were even forcefully dragged out from their nest because living in this type of small town did not require waking up so early to begin work. Although quite a few people were slightly disgruntled at the magician who made the request, when they saw the eight silvers neatly placed on the bedside table, those disgruntlement instantly vanished.

Naturally, Roland's personal effects were bound to have money inside. Before arriving at the small town, Yi Longlong had long figured it out during her spare time. Although she wasn't too clear on the standard commodity prices, based on the food and accommodation fees from the tavern, she could deduce that this money was enough to last her and Lin Qi for some time without having to worry about the basic necessities.

Her time wasn't much; it shouldn't be wasted. As such, she could only resort to money flinging to speed up the process. She had spent a silver on each person just by inviting them here; the reward was to be calculated separately.

After the tailors, carpenters, and blacksmith followed the tavern boss into Lin Qi's room, they saw an extraordinarily serene and elegant looking youth in a black robe, sitting on top of the bed with a passive and innocent expression. His hair was slightly damp from having washed it before, further accentuating the smooth ebony-like blackness. His skin was tender and pale, cleaner and purer than snow.

As for his eyes, they were a deep, dark black yet also clear as crystal, reflecting the most genuine purity in the world. Under the watchful gaze of these eyes, anyone who harbored evil thoughts would all feel a sense of inferiority.

The people from the small town had seen all kinds of adventurers before, but when did they ever see such a refined character? He was unreal, as if he was

crafted by the hands of illusions. Like the most precious and delicate piece of art, he should have been surrounded by silks and furs, and not have come to this sort of place.

Lin Qi did not care what others had on their minds. He merely did what Yi Longlong taught him, handing the eight artisans the blueprints that were prepared early on and placed on the table, as well as mentioning his separate requests.

He demanded a carpenter to make a light and sturdy wooden crate to be carried on the back. Several squares were drawn in the middle section of the wooden crate. On the upper part of the wooden crate were partitions that were approximately vertically half feet high from four sides. The hollow parts of the partitions were carved with simple patterns. Following that, the blacksmith will reinforce the wooden crate with pieces of metal.

He demanded a tailor to produce at their quickest speed three plain clothes not for a mage to wear, and also provided a blueprint at the same time. There were several pictures on the print; they were clothes he designed himself. Ignoring the strange styles, the sizes were just big enough for an infant to wear. He ordered ten sets all at once for this type of clothing,

Both the wooden crate and clothes had comprehensive diagrams drawn on paper. Essentially as long as they were not mentally handicapped, they would be able to understand, but what made these few artisans surprised was, for some unknown reason, besides the ink, there were also tiny paw prints of some unidentified animal.

“The quicker the better.” Lin Qi recited the lines that Yi Longlong had taught him, “I can increase the reward.”

And so, before Lin Qi left the inn in the afternoon, rumors of the strange yet extraordinarily beautiful magician had already seemingly sprouted wings and spread throughout the entire small town.

Chapter 34: The pride and shame of Vanilla Town

Midday.

Today at Oak Tree Tavern, the number of guests was two-thirds greater than usual. These extra guests were all residents that were usually rather idle. Having heard the rumors of the beautiful and strange magician, they pushed forward their nightly drinks to midday.

Truth to be told, it's not that they really had to see Lin Qi himself. People always liked to flock towards places bustling with gossip, and so created the scene right now.

The tavern boss was naturally absolutely gleeful over this tiny incident. The bit of resentment garnered from this morning when he was woken up by Lin Qi to run errands disappeared without a trace.

The crowd drank ale while guessing at the origins of the beautiful magician. All the way till noon, the tavern boss remembered that Lin Qi did not order food ever since he got up this morning, and so found an excuse to go knocking on the door upstairs and enquire if Lin Qi needed lunch. Seeing no reply after knocking for a bit, he took out a spare key to open the door. Seeing that the room was empty inside, he recalled the magician self-proclaiming his fancy for switching rooms to sleep in. He opened another door but it was also empty.

At this time, Lin Qi and Yi Longlong were already walking on the streets of Vanilla Town.

Well to be exact, it was Lin Qi walking by himself. He bore a giant wooden crate that had just been completed on his back. On top of the wooden crate was a four sided partition covered by a layer of white linen curtains, with a set of extremely minuscule plush bedding placed inside. Because they were stuffed with lots of cotton, it was totally soft and comfy. Yi Longlong was currently reclined inside. It kept the sun out and also saved effort. She could see the things happening outside by looking through the hollow patterned decors on the partition, however people outside may be unable to clearly see her.

Lin Qi tied up his black hair that had reached his waist with a hair tie. He also

changed into light, ordinary clothes. Although his good looks still stuck out from the crowd, it was no longer filled with the vacant and peaceful allure from this morning.

The same rules still applied. Yi Longlong reminded Lin Qi how to do things, and moreover, when they needed to ask for directions or buy things, one of them lip synced while the other dubbed. After coordinating many times, they gradually became skilled at it.

On the way, they bought some vanilla cookies specially produced in Vanilla Town. Lin Qi held a thick paper bag that still gave off steam in one hand, walking while leisurely eating. He took out two pieces and handed it to the side of the crate on his back. Two small, white paws reached out like lightning from within the curtains. After grabbing the cookies, it shrank back like lightning, and following that, tiny sounds of kachi kachi rang out behind Lin Qi.

Yi Longlong had formerly wanted to find the library, but in a small town like Vanilla Town, there were no facilities similar to a library, so they could only head towards the temple. This was a place within the town that could still be considered to have a rather cultured atmosphere.

The majority of people on this continent worshipped a god named Aldin. The church had powers widespread in several countries. Their influence was so great that it could practically administrate in all departments. In nearly every district, the church would build a temple and send a priest towards that place to impart their teachings and strengthen their influence.

Because priests also simultaneously knew the divine arts of healing, in some places they could also work as a doctor, especially in a place like Vanilla Town that did not have any good doctors.

Vanilla Town was located on the outskirts. The priest in charge for this district was named Levi. He was sent from the Royal City three years ago. From other people's descriptions of him and also from asking the people from the town, Yi Longlong learnt some things about him.

That grey haired priest who was with the palette squad was a local from Vanilla Town. He was initially a youth that enjoyed reading books. Other than being hard worker, his talent was utterly mediocre, yet Levi turned him from being an

ordinary person into a certified priest with just a year's training.

Usually speaking, becoming a priest isn't a matter too difficult. They must have widespread knowledge, understand the religion's theology, as well as go through systematic training in the divine arts. Based on the usual process, it takes at least ten years of training, yet the crash course priest from Vanilla Town used only just a year and passed the official examinations at the temple of the Royal City.

In addition to that, there were also rumors saying Levi was originally a great priest candidate with boundless prospects, but due to a case of illicit affairs, he was demoted from the prosperous Royal City to the outskirts. Some kind soul even went so far as to advise Lin Qi while looking at him with worry, "If you have to go to the temple, it's best to be careful. Although you're male, rumors have it that priest Levi doesn't mind the sexes..."

Furthermore, there were also people who called Levi "the pride and shame of Vanilla Town".

After being scared along the way, by the time Lin Qi arrived in front of the temple located in the east of the small town, as Yi Longlong looked at that majestic building, she already had the false impression of looking at a tiger's den.

The temple was built out of stones. It had a particularly heavy atmosphere; a carving of a grandiose and benevolent god was on top of the temple's entrance in front of them.

"Oi." Yi Longlong stuck a paw out from the gaps of the partition, gave Lin Qi a tap and discussed in a very small voice, "Or else, we should still withdraw, I just have the feeling that it's very dangerous."

Lin Qi still held the half-finished bag of cookies in a hand. He stared at the temple, brows wrinkling. For some reason he wasn't too at ease in his heart. Yi Longlong's suggestion was right there with his intentions. "Okay."

Having said that he turned around, but at this moment, a youth wearing a white robe came out from within the temple. When he saw Lin Qi, he hurriedly walked over and warmly asked with courtesy what he needed, was it for a prayer or for healing.

The youth's appearance could still be considered handsome. On his face were

several shallow pock marks, but his manner and bearing was extremely refined, making him look very easy on the eyes.

Yi Longlong probed with a question, “Who may you be?”

The youth faintly smiled, lifted his right hand with two fingers together and pressed them on the pattern embroidered on the left shoulder. “I am an apprentice priest from the temple, studying under teacher Levi. I hope I can become an official priest.”

Oh, so the temple did not only have one person.

Seeing the apprentice priest’s peaceful manner, Yi Longlong relaxed. She felt the rumors from the town’s residents may have been exaggerated, just like today how a crowd of people were packed downstairs waiting to see Lin Qi.

Just as before, Yi Longlong imitated Lin Qi’s voice, “I want to take a browse at the collection of books within the temple; may I please receive permission for it?”

The apprentice priest faintly smiled while making an as you please gesture. “Of course you may, please follow me inside.”

Under the guidance of the apprentice priest, Lin Qi entered the temple and arrived inside a book room. As the apprentice priest was about to leave, he offered Lin Qi several precautions, such as don’t damage the books, not allowed to take them away and so on.

Soon after, only Lin Qi himself and a dragon remained inside the book room.

1. 里维Lǐ wéi – Levi
2. To clarify, Great Priest position in the hierarchy

Chapter 35: Heresy

Certain that the apprentice priest will not return again, Yi Longlong crawled out from beneath the linen curtains.

This was a room made of stone with only a single entrance, and other than that, the three sides were sealed. It was around six to seven meters long, and excluding the place near the door, all four walls were erected with book shelves. The books were placed orderly from level to level. The moment they came in, they could smell the scent of old pages and ink mixed together. A table and chair was placed at the center of the room to let people sit here and read books.

Naturally, the letters of this world were quite different from those of Earth, but before Yi Longlong came here, she still held onto a tiny delusion, hoping that while she was naturally gifted with the ability to speak this world's language, she would also be able to read and comprehend the letters.

But as she stared at those rows upon rows of dizzying and confusing book titles upon the bookshelves, no matter how many times she looked, she still could not understand it; she could not automatically translate it to Chinese inside her head.

Yi Longlong heaved a sigh while slightly disappointed, but was also not too overly dispirited. At the very least she was born with the ability to speak this world's language, which already saved quite a lot of effort. As for things like letters, there's still time to slowly study it.

Just when she was about to dejectedly call out to Lin Qi to leave, the silent youth who had not spoken a word till now reached out and retrieved a book from the shelf. He lowered his head and began to thumb through the book. Seeing his behavior, Yi Longlong became interested and asked, "You can understand it?"

Lin Qi nodded slightly.

Yi Longlong instantly regained her energy. "How about this, I point at a book, you help me read out that book's title, if there are useful books, open it and read it out for me."

The little paws pointed left and right, and with Lin Qi's real-time translations, Yi Longlong understood that the books inside this room were mostly related to theology of the religion, elaborating on theology and religious stories. Occasionally a small section touched on the continent's history, which was also blended with parts of occultism, just like Christianity on Earth, declaring that God said let there be light, and then there was light.

In this world, that God called Aldin was essentially in a position equivalent to the God in Christianity, only that his might was more widespread and steady than God, because in this world, the existence of what is known as the divine arts could really be seen. Hence, everyone was dead set on their beliefs.

Although Yi Longlong was able to understand it in general, she was just not interested in these types of stuff. After searching around, they did not discover any overly valuable reference materials. She could only give up for now and wait till they arrive at a large city, then look for an actual library or book store. No longer flipping through and searching, she had Lin Qi ask to borrow a pen and paper from one of the people inside the temple and copy down some letters.

The letters were written from left to right. The spaces between the lines were distanced quite far apart. After waiting for Lin Qi to finish copying down the words, Yi Longlong then took the pen, her whole body standing on the paper with one paw clutched on the pen. She crookedly wrote down Lin Qi's oral translations down in Chinese, including every single word and the meanings of whole phrases.

After copying them down, she put down the pen in satisfaction. Discovering her paws were dirtied with ink, she then conveniently wiped it on the paper, leaving behind two tiny paw prints overlapping on each other.

With the main objective of coming to the temple completed, Yi Longlong did not plan on staying any longer, in case priest Levi was really like that as said in the rumors. It probably won't be too good if Lin Qi bumped into him.

She hid back inside the screens of the wooden crate. Just as she was about to direct Lin Qi to leave the book room, a person suddenly came through the door.

That person ran very quickly and almost collided with Lin Qi, but Lin Qi nimbly moved back two steps, barely avoiding this crash. That person then dangerously

lost his balance and fell down.

That person stood straight back up. Yi Longlong then found out that he was a youth around sixteen or seventeen years old, wearing a white robe almost styled exactly like what the apprentice priest from before was wearing, however the shoulders had an extra layer of large collars. The edges of the collar were embroidered with silver threads of complicated patterns of rosemary and thyme.

The amber colored short hair was tidy and filled with radiance. Although he had a proper and handsome appearance, his big round eyes and baby face made the youth mistakenly look very round and great to pinch.

Having taken a good look at Lin Qi, the youth stared blankly for a moment in quite an obvious manner. Even his eyes had a moment of puzzlement. Yi Longlong was already used to seeing this type of expression. At the very beginning, those who saw Lin Qi would be astounded by his beauty.

After that, the youth's face revealed a light giddy smile. His eyes restlessly measured up Lin Qi from top to bottom. "May I ask if you are here to read books? What books are you looking for? Perhaps I can be of help."

But at this time Yi Longlong had already decided to leave. Lin Qi also did not waste words. He went around him then headed towards the door.

In a messy rush, the youth stopped Lin Qi and looked at him pitifully. "Wait, can you accompany me on the way out, I just escaped homework, if I'm caught, I will definitely be punished. In a moment I'll accompany you out. If we come across people, can you help cover for me? And say I'm going with you on a tour of the temple?"

His face looked extremely pitiful, like a kid who loved to play and was unwilling to be confined by strict rules.

Lin Qi looked at him in puzzlement, all until he was jabbed in the back by Yi Longlong – This was the hidden signal they came up with which represented agreement. He then nodded his head.

The youth gave a big sigh of relief, his face then radiated with a joyful expression. "I'll go escort you!"

They left the book room. The youth led the way in front. The footpaths inside

the temple were extremely quiet. The youth led Lin Qi around two corners. Lin Qi all of a sudden slowed his footsteps to a halt, because behind him Yi Longlong had reached out and pulled his hair with her paw.

Hidden behind Lin Qi, Yi Longlong asked questioningly, "Just then when someone led us in, it didn't seem to be this path." She was different from a certain fellow who could lose their way in circles.

Without looking back, the youth spoke with a giggle, "Back door, it's the back door... How would I dare walk to the front of the temple, I'll definitely get caught." After saying that, he turned back and revealed a pleasing smile. "Please."

They went along a curvy passageway, and all the way at the end was a stone door. The youth lifted his hand and pressed the knob sticking out beside the stone door. Having pressed the knob, the stone door slowly rose. While the youth waited for the door to open, he explained to Lin Qi, "The back door can be reached through this temple used for prayers."

The stone door had completely lifted. The youth took the lead and walked in first. Lin Qi followed close behind. The youth then closed the door along the way.

The temple was tremendously spacious, with fairly complicated patterns drawn on the floor. At first glance it seemed to be silver colored cogs of various sizes interlocked at different angles, and when they reached the center of the largest picture of a circular disc, a change suddenly happened!

The bottom of the circular disc bloomed with milky white light. That light seemed to use a slow and unhurried but in reality an extremely quick speed to expand its range. Everything in the surroundings seemed to be swallowed within the light that flowed like water, and after the statue they saw that day on top was enveloped by the soft milky white light, the whole temple gave off radiance that people were unable to watch. Yi Longlong almost could not open her eyes from the brightness of this radiance.

After the radiance dispersed, Yi Longlong saw the milky white light congealed into chains, tightly binding Lin Qi's body. That power was so great and firm that it could even be felt by her who was hidden on top of the crate.

Meanwhile the youth continued to walk forward as if he had not noticed

anything at all. After taking ten or so steps, he slowly turned around. On his excessively young face hung a cold smile, “The moment I saw you, I felt something wasn’t quite right... Although the surface is in the shape of a human, your body has a smell that’s not human at all... Heresy!”

Pausing, he lifted his hand and gave a salute, “Forgot to introduce myself, I’m Levi, the priest responsible for Vanilla Town.”

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